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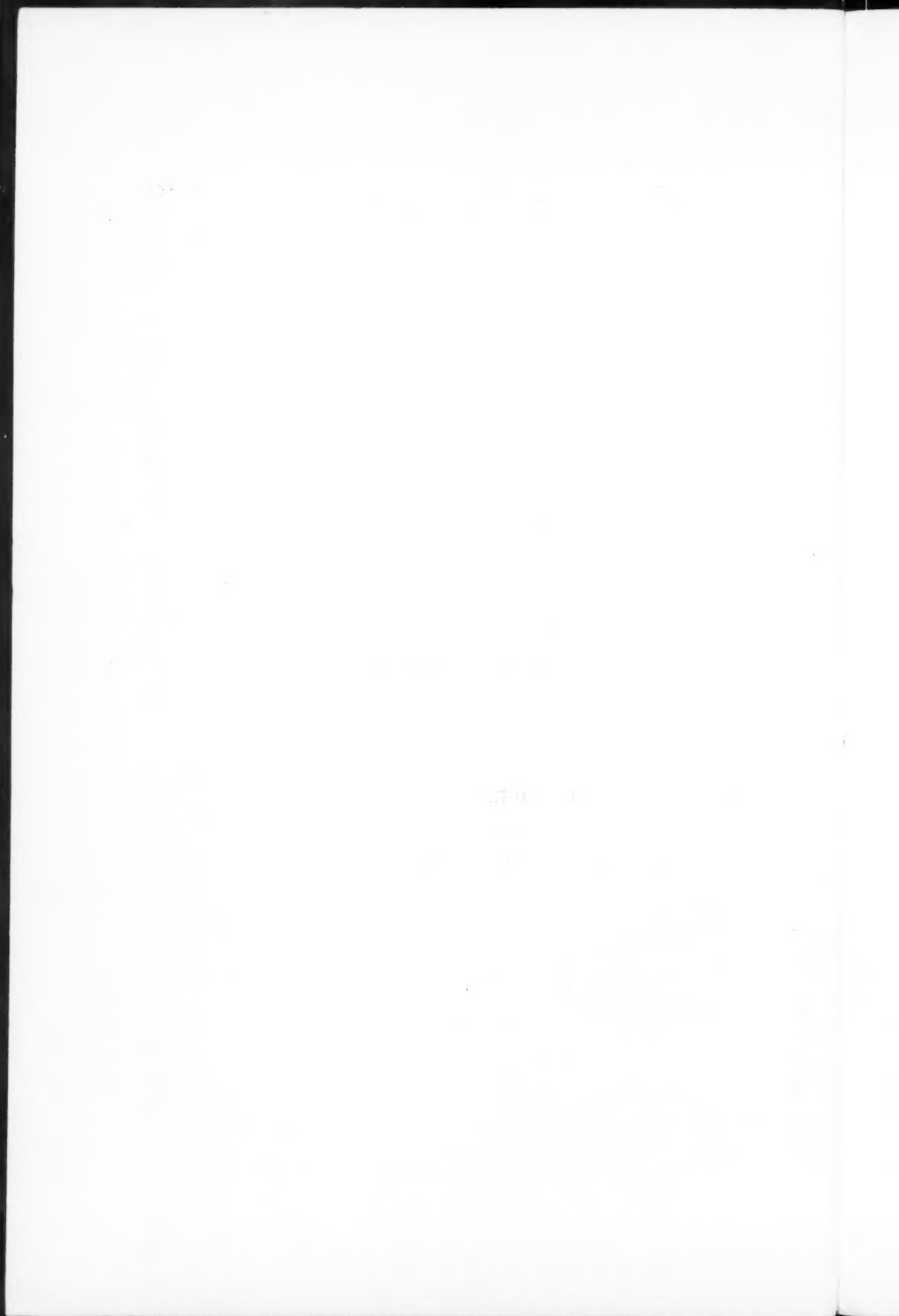
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HAROLD F. KAUFMAN

Mississippi State University

With Lucy W. Cole, David D. Franks and Mary B. Whitmarsh

Mississippi Churches: A Half Century Of Change

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

In 1957 the 810,248 memberships held in churches reporting in Mississippi formed 64 per cent of the estimated white population. Four-fifths of the white population 14 years of age and over were estimated to be church members, giving Mississippi one of the largest rates in the nation. The number of churches relative to the population was the highest of all states. In Mississippi there were only 289 persons per church, as compared with an average of 814 persons for the nation.

Forty-two different religious bodies were found in the state in 1957. Eighteen reported more than 1,000 members. The five largest bodies in order of strength were Southern Baptist, Methodist, Roman Catholic, Presbyterian U. S., and North American Baptist. These five bodies had 91 percent of all memberships reported. Southern Baptists had 54 percent of all memberships and Methodists 23 percent. The former religious body was relatively stronger in Mississippi than in any other state. The pattern of religious bodies in the state was characteristic of that of the South in that Roman Catholic and Jewish groups were relatively small and the Protestant membership was made up predominantly of Southern Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian U. S.

For the period 1906-57 the number of church memberships increased from nearly 300,000 to over 800,000, or approximately 170 percent. Churches of Christ and Southern Baptist had a rate of increase

approximately two and a half times that of the Methodist, Catholic, and Presbyterian.

Areas and counties of the state varied as to the rate of church membership and as to the religious composition. The largest cluster of counties with low percent of membership were in the southwest and northeast. Those with highest rates of membership were found from north to south throughout the central part of the state. The membership rate was nearly twice as great in a group of counties in the north central section of the state as in a cluster of counties in the southeast. The percent that church memberships formed of the estimated population was three and a half times as large in a central hill county with 108 percent as in a coastal county with only 29 percent. Southern Baptists were the largest religious body in 78 counties, Methodists in two, and Catholics in two. Southern Baptists were more rural than other groups and strongest in the hill sections of the state running from Pike County in the south to Benton in the north. Methodist strength was somewhat more dispersed, but this body too was concentrated in the north central part of the state. The Roman Catholics were concentrated in counties on the coast or on the Mississippi River, Churches of Christ, in the northeast part of the state, and the North American Baptists, in the southeast.

Three conditions are suggested as being related to high rates of church membership. They are (1) a high social and economic level, (2) strong religious organization, and (3) a stable population. In the study of a sample of 1675 adults in small towns and in the open country in six Mississippi counties, education and social and economic standing were found to be highly related to degree of church activity. Persons with a college education, for example, were twice as likely to be active in church and 11 times as likely to hold an office as were those with less than eight years of schooling.

In some of the counties with higher rates of church membership there appeared to be relatively strong religious organization, relatively stable population, and average or higher income. In others, however, income was relatively low and the population was rapidly declining. Counties with the lowest rates of membership likewise represented two patterns. In the one, income was relatively high, religious organization relatively strong, but population growth was rapid. In the other the reverse was true with respect to all three conditions.

OBJECTIVES AND DATA

The importance of churches in the state may be measured not only by the objectives they are established to realize, but also by the number of persons participating in their work. Churches are the most widely found of all voluntary organizations in the state. They and their

affiliated groups, such as Sunday Schools and women's societies, probably have more memberships than all other voluntary organizations, civic, fraternal, etc., combined.¹

Although each religious body keeps its own statistics, no picture for the total population, all religious groups combined, has been obtained for over 30 years, since the U. S. Census of Religious Bodies in 1926.² Consequently, it is of value not only to religious leaders but to all persons interested in the social and economic life of the state and its development to have an overall picture and some knowledge of the relative strength of religious groups.

Objectives of the Study

The study has three major objectives. One is to discover the number of religious bodies, the number of churches, and the number of memberships for each body, and to note changes for the period 1906 to 1957. The Mississippi situation is interpreted and given meaning by comparing it with that of the South and the nation.

A second objective is to analyze the differences among counties and sections of the state with respect to the overall membership rate — the proportion that church memberships were of the total population — and the rates for the various religious bodies. Rural-urban differences are noted and the trends in church memberships for the period 1926-57 are examined for the largest bodies.

A third aim of the study is to relate certain social and economic factors such as years of schooling, occupation, income, and population change to church membership. Analysis is made of a sample of 1675 individuals as well as groupings of the 82 counties in terms of these factors.

The Data

The data for this study have come from a number of sources. The data for 1906 and 1926 were taken from the Census of Religious Bodies for those years.³ The data for the 1950 decade were secured from published reports of religious bodies concerned, by correspondence with

¹See Raymond Payne and Harold F. Kaufman, *Organizational Activities of Rural People in Mississippi*, Mississippi Agricultural Experiment Station, Circular 189, November, 1953.

²A religious census was also taken in 1936, but it was grossly underenumerated especially for rural and congregationally organized churches.

³*Religious Bodies, 1906 and 1926*, Bureau of the Census, U. S. Department of Commerce, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C.

leaders of the respective groups⁴, and from a study made by the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.⁵ The data for the largest religious bodies were for 1957 and for some of the smaller ones as early as 1952.⁶ In order to facilitate the discussion to follow, however, statistics for the period 1952 to 1957 will be called the "1957" data.

Population statistics for 1950 and earlier were taken from the U. S. Census of Population. The 1957 estimate for the population of Mississippi counties was made by the department preparing this report.⁷

Information on individual church members was secured by surveys carried on by the department making this study. A sample population, including 1675 persons located in six counties, was analyzed, and the findings on church participation are presented in the last section of this report.

A Measure of Organized Religious Activity

Church memberships, when computed as a proportion of the population, represent an index or measure of organized religious effort. For convenience throughout the rest of this report, this measure is referred to as the percent church membership, or the membership rate. This index does not indicate the comparative religiousness of people, as groups vary as to the degree to which their religious behavior is or

⁴Acknowledgement is made to the following persons supplying statistics on which this bulletin is based: Rev. W. F. Appleby, Rev. V. O. Agan, Rt. Rev. Joseph Brunnini, Rev. Paul Blackmon, Prof. W. C. Bailey, Rev. Preston M. Cochran, Rev. Arthur Dore, Rev. Martin J. Gilbert, Rt. Rev. Duncan M. Gray, Rev. Maurice Grove, Rt. Rev. Msgr. James J. Hannon, Rev. Kenneth Hall, Rev. J. B. Middleton, Rev. Robert M. McGehee, Rev. R. G. Moore, Rev. Buford Miller, Rev. Lincoln D. Newman, Rabbi Perry Nussbaum, Maj. Frank Osborne, Rev. R. B. Patterson, Capt. John Polansky, Rev. H. T. Statum, Rev. James Staggs, Rev. Lloyd H. Seiler, Rev. John Sutphin, Rev. A. B. Teffeteller, Rev. Worth M. Tippy, Rev. J. Kelly Unger, Capt. James Walker, 2nd Lt. Janice Whitehurst, 2nd Lt. Arnold Williford. For position and address of these individuals, see *Mississippi Churches, Statistical Supplement*, Bulletin 12-S.

This bulletin, which contains detailed statistics by county, may be obtained by sending a request to the Division of Sociology and Rural Life, Mississippi State University, State College, Mississippi.

⁵*Churches and Church Membership in the United States*, Bureau of Research and Survey, Division of Home Missions, National Council of Churches of Christ in the U. S., New York, 1957, Series C, No. 44 and 45. These statistics were gathered for the year 1952.

⁶For the year to which the statistics of each religious body pertain, see Bulletin 12-S, *op. cit.*

⁷Sociology and Rural Life. See George L. Wilber, *Estimated Population Trends in Mississippi*, 1950-58, Mississippi Agricultural Experiment Station Bulletin 577, May, 1959.

ganized. Likewise the index is not a measure of quality of organized religious effort, and it has several limitations concerning accurate enumeration. Although these limitations exist, the church membership index is the only one available for state and county analysis, and when used with care provides information and insight not possible without its use.

Data Lacking on Negro Churches

A major limitation of this study is that data were not available on Negro churches. As the church is as important and perhaps in some cases even more so, in Negro society than in white, this is a serious deficiency with respect to presenting the church picture for the state. As published sources in most cases were lacking, to get statistics from the many Negro churches would have demanded a field survey. This was not possible with the funds and time available.⁸ Consequently, this study deals only with the white population, their churches and their memberships.

One study has indicated that the proportion of Negroes belonging to and attending churches is about the same as of whites.⁹ Thus an estimate of total church membership in the state at present might be computed on the basis of the ratio that the Negro population is to the white.¹⁰

Under and Overenumeration

The second major limitation of the data results from both an under and overenumeration of church membership without an adequate basis for estimating the amount of error. Concerning the state totals, some underenumeration probably existed in 1906 and 1926 because some local churches did not report to the Bureau of the Census. On the other hand, the state figures for 1957 were probably overenumerated. Some of the larger bodies might have had a sizeable percentage of persons on their rolls who were not resident in the state. Memberships of the churches not reported in 1957 were likely less than 2 percent of the total.

Church memberships are a much less accurate index in counties and communities with a rapidly changing population than in those

⁸Because of the lack of statistics on Negro churches, the National Council of Churches study, *Churches and Church Membership in the United States*, *op. cit.*, also had to omit an analysis of the Negro population.

⁹See Raymond Payne, *Organizational Activities of Rural Negroes in Mississippi*, Mississippi Agricultural Experiment Station Circular 192, December 1953, p. 12.

¹⁰The Negro population was an estimated 43 percent of the total in 1957.

in which population is stable. Church membership lags behind population changes. For example, in 1957 in one county with a heavy loss of population, the membership as reported by the churches in the county formed 108 percent of the estimated population. It is likely that in this county the membership of persons resident in the county formed no more than three-fourths of the population. On the other hand, underenumeration is likely to take place where population is increasing at a rapid rate. This results from the fact that incoming persons are slow in moving their membership from churches of their former residence to those in the community in which they are now living.

At this point it should be emphasized that the major statistic in this study is church memberships, not members. No information was obtained on a state or county basis on the residence or degree of activity of persons holding membership in churches. Thus the memberships represent persons who were highly active, those who were resident but inactive, those who were nonresident, and in some cases the deceased.¹¹

Information on the proportion of nonresident memberships came from two limited sources. The Disciples of Christ, the only religious body which had nonresident members listed in its official publication, reported 15 percent of all memberships nonresident. Almost all the memberships reporting for this body were in the larger centers. Thus it would be expected that nonresident memberships would be considerably higher in the open country and small towns. A second body of evidence with respect to overenumeration came from a rural county in which a religious survey had just been completed. The survey reported 20 percent less Southern Baptists and 10 percent less Methodists than the church rolls. The real difference between resident membership and the total was probably even greater because the survey likely reported persons who were members of these two religious bodies but were not on the rolls of churches in the county surveyed.

Underenumeration of church memberships resulted in some counties from the lack of statistics for certain smaller religious groups and for independent churches. For the state as a whole at least 40,000 church memberships were not reported by county.¹²

Thus, overenumeration resulted from rolls containing names of persons nonresident and deceased, and underenumeration, from churches not reported and church members not affiliated with churches in the county. Although these factors create some error, and in some

¹¹One study reported that for rural churches in the South less than three-fifths of the persons on membership rolls "are at once resident, attending, and contributing." Douglas and Brunner, *The Protestant Church as a Social Institution* (New York, Harper, 1935), p. 43.

¹²See difference between the total given in Table 1 below and the total given in Table S in Bulletin 12-S, *op. cit.*

counties a substantial one, church membership is the best measure of religious activity available, and makes possible the first presentation of a comprehensive picture of Mississippi churches and church membership.

THE STATE PICTURE

In 1957 the 810,248 church memberships reported in the state formed 64 percent of the estimated population (see Table 1). In the same year 42 different religious bodies were found in the state. The 18 listed in Table 1 reported more than 1,000 members each. Seventeen religious bodies which had less than 1,000 members reported their full membership and number of churches located within the state.¹³ In addition to the 35 religious bodies listed in Table 1 and footnote 13, seven other religious groups were reported as having one or more churches in the state.¹⁴

Seven of the church bodies shown in Table 1 reported over 10,000

¹³ THESE WERE:

	Members	Churches
Advent Christian	182	5
Church of God, Anderson, Ind.*	962	23
Evangelical & Reformed Church	106	2
Evangelical Free Church of America	60	1
International Church of Foursquare Gospel*	394	6
Latter-day Saints, Reorg. Ch. of Jesus Christ	551	4
Lutheran Church, American Evangelical	43	1
Lutheran Church, Finn. Evan. (Soumi Synod)	21	1
Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod	914	9
Mennonite Church	88	2
Pentecostal Holiness Church, Inc.	367	13
Presbyterian Assoc. Reformed (Gen. Synod)	515	3
Unitarian Church	22	1
United Lutheran Church in America*	517	11
Universalist Church of America	213	3
Volunteers of America	80	1
Wesleyan Methodist Church of America*	28	2

*All figures designated with an asterisk came from Executive Headquarters. Other figures were taken from **Churches and Church Membership in the U. S.**, Series B, Bulletin No. 6, Table 12.

¹⁴American Baptist Association, Fundamentalist Baptist, Greek Archdiocese of North and South America, Jehovah's Witness, Protestant Methodist Church, Primitive Baptist, and Salvation Army.

Table 1. Number of Members and Number of Churches in Mississippi by Church Body Reporting for Selected Years.^a

Church Bodies	Number of Members		Number of Churches	
	1906	1926	1906	1926
All Church Bodies	298,673	452,084	810,248	3,829
Southern Baptist Convention	123,357	211,370	439,811	1,515
The Methodist Church ^b	99,927	139,330	183,019	1,231
The Roman Catholic Church	26,915	29,749	55,070	86
Presbyterian Church in the U. S.	15,233	22,689	33,359	244
North American Baptist Association	*	7,028	25,900	*
The Protestant Episcopal Church	4,804	8,628	11,708	79
Churches of Christ	3,114	6,351	11,656 ^c	46
Disciples of Christ, International Conven.	6,227	6,662	8,231	97
Assemblies of God ^d	0	119	5,797	0
Church of God, Cleveland, Tenn. ^d	0	0	4,823	0
Jewish Congregations ^{d,e}	1,746	2,871	3,500	19
United Pentecostal Church, Inc.	0	0	3,300	0
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints	1,018	1,508	2,861	*
Church of the Nazarene	0	227	2,413	0
The Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A.	*	2,399	2,019	*
Cumberland Presbyterian Church	5,991	1,671	1,753	119
Seventh Day Adventists ^{d,f}	303	485	1,707 ^d	17
The Church of God of Prophecy	0	0	1,363	0
All Others	10,038	10,997	11,958 ^g	230
				243
				177 ^g

^aFor sources of statistics see section on Nature and Sources of Data.^bMethodist figures for 1906 and 1926 include Methodist Episcopal Church South and Methodist Protestants.^cEnumeration made prior to 1954, possibly 1952 or 1953.^dNational Council of Churches, statistics for 1952.^eJewish Congregations for 1906 and 1926 include only head of household.^fOf the church bodies reported in this table, only Seventh Day Adventists have one or more Negro churches; the counties where they are located are unknown.^gFor most of the religious bodies included here, statistics are for 1952.

*Number unknown.

members in 1957. Churches of the Southern Baptist Convention had the largest number, reporting 54 percent of all church members in the state.¹⁵ In second place was the Methodist, with 23 percent of the total. Following in order were the Roman Catholic with 7 percent, the Presbyterian U. S. with 4 percent, the North American Baptist with 3 percent, the Protestant Episcopal and the Church of Christ with 1.4 percent each. The two largest bodies, Baptist and Methodist, had 77 percent of the total membership, and the five largest 91 percent.

In 1957 the religious bodies reporting had a total of 4,372 churches. The average membership per church was 185. Of the seven largest bodies, the Roman Catholic had the largest average membership, 860 members per church and the Church of Christ the smallest with an average membership per church of 67. The other five bodies in order were the Protestant Episcopal with 272, the Southern Baptist with 248, the Methodist with 163, the Presbyterian U. S. with 135, and the North American Baptist with 111.

A Half Century of Change

In the half century under study the number of religious bodies in the state reporting one or more churches in 1906 was 31; in 1925, 34; and in 1957, 42.

For the period 1906-1957 the number of church memberships increased from nearly 300,000 to over 800,000, or approximately 170 percent. The number and percent increase for each of the larger bodies were as follows:

	NUMBER	PERCENT
Southern Baptist Convention	316,454	257
Methodist	83,164	83
Roman Catholic	28,155	105
Presbyterian U. S.	18,126	119
Protestant Episcopal	6,904	144
Churches of Christ	8,542	274
All others	24,402	96

As the percent increase indicates, the Churches of Christ and Southern Baptists had the highest rates of growth. The Southern Baptists' rate of increase was over three times that of the Methodists—257 percent to 83 percent. Consequently, whereas Southern Baptists formed 41 percent of all church members in the state in 1906, they had increased to

¹⁵Although this body reported over half of the church memberships, it had only two-fifths of the churches.

54 percent by 1957. For the same period the Methodists declined from 33 to 23 percent, the Roman Catholics from 9 to 7 percent, and the Presbyterian U. S. from 5 to 4 percent.

The number of churches increased much less rapidly in the half century under study than did church memberships. The number of churches increased by only 24 percent, while the number of members increased 171 percent. Of the four largest bodies, only the Baptist had an increase in number of churches; for this body the number of churches increased by 31 percent. For the 50 years under study the Churches of Christ increased fourfold, while the Episcopal body lost nearly half of its churches.

A much greater increase in membership than in churches resulted in a marked increase in the average membership per church. Average membership per church in 1906 was 85 and in 1957 was 186. For the seven largest bodies on which statistics were available, only the Churches of Christ did not increase in number of members per church. They remained between 60 and 70 members per church during the entire period. Bodies in which the average size of churches increased most from 1906 to 1957 were the Roman Catholic with a change in average membership from 313 to 860, the Protestant Episcopal from 61 to 272, and the Southern Baptist from 91 to 243. Those with less increase were the Presbyterian U. S., moving from 62 to 131, and the Methodist from 81 to 163 for the years 1906 and 1957 respectively.

Mississippi, the Region, and the Nation

Church statistics for the state may be seen in perspective and interpreted when Mississippi is compared with adjoining states, the South, and the nation.

Rate of Church Membership

If the proper corrections were made for age and race, Mississippi had one of the highest rates of church membership in the nation. When allowance was made so that church bodies that did not include infants and small children in their membership were compared on the same basis with those that did, an estimated rate of membership for Mississippi was 78. Only three other states had a higher rate—Rhode Island, 79; South Carolina, 82; and Louisiana, 89.¹⁶

¹⁶See *Churches and Church Membership in the United States*, National Council of Churches, Series A, Bul. No. 3, Table 6. Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Episcopal, and Latter-day Saints bodies practice infant baptism and include all baptized members. It was found that over a period of years the number of baptized members was about 30 percent greater than the number of confirmed members. As a correction, 30 percent of the total was added to the membership of those Protestant groups which did not have infant members.

As stated above, this study found white church memberships to form 64 percent of the population in 1957. Additional evidence on the rate of church membership is gained from a survey of 1675 rural families in the early fifties. In this group 83 percent of the husbands and wives claimed church membership and 62 percent reported that they attended church at least a fourth of the time during the year.

When correction was made for age as noted above, the South had a rate of church membership above that of the nation and equal to that of New England. The high rate in New England may be attributed to the great strength of the Roman Catholic Church, which has well over 50 percent of the church membership in that region.

The rate of growth of church membership in Mississippi is probably a little higher than that for the nation. From 1906 to 1957 the percent of church memberships of the white population increased from 41 to 64. For the nation the percent increased from 39 to 60 during this period.¹⁷

Number of Churches

Mississippi has a higher number of churches for population than any state in the union. On the basis of the number of churches secured in this survey and the estimate of the white population for 1957, there were in the state 289 persons per church. It is significant that this calculation is within 4 of the estimate of 293 made by the survey of the National Council of Churches.¹⁸ When Catholic and Jewish groups were omitted, the number of persons per church in Mississippi was 279.

Other states with a relatively large number of churches were North Dakota with 304 white Protestant population per church, South Carolina with 336, and Alabama with 366. The South had relatively the largest number of churches of any region with only 436 persons per church. Of all the sub-regions, the East South Central¹⁹, of which Mississippi is one of the four states, had the lowest with 388 persons per church. The average for the nation was 605 for white Protestant popu-

¹⁷As suggested above, as high as one-third of the members of churches who have infant members are 13 years of age and under. This is to be compared with from 5 to 10 percent for the larger Protestant denominations such as the Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, and Disciples.

¹⁸Series A, Bul. No. 4, Table 10.

¹⁹This includes the states of Mississippi, Alabama, Tennessee, and Kentucky.

lation and 814 for the white population of all faiths. In contrast, the most Catholic state in the nation, Rhode Island, had a total population of 2,329 persons per church.²⁰

Two major factors appear to account for the relatively large number of churches in the state. One is the rurality of the state; the second is the type of religious body which is dominant. As has been seen, Protestants and especially groups such as Methodist and Baptist have much smaller churches than do the Roman Catholic and the Jewish groups. Rurality appears to be a factor in that the state second to Mississippi in the relative number of churches is North Dakota, which in 1950 was the only state more rural than Mississippi.

Relative Number and Strength of Religious Bodies

In general, the larger and the more urban²¹ a population the larger is the number of religious bodies to be found. Thus, as might be expected, Mississippi had fewer religious bodies (42 reported in 1957) than did the larger, more urban states. It is quite likely that some states such as California would have more than twice as many religious bodies as Mississippi. In 1957, 258²² separate religious bodies were reported in the nation.

Mississippi is one of the most Protestant states in the nation. The National Council of Churches²³ survey estimated that in 1950, 53 percent of the church members in the nation were Protestant, 79 percent in the South, 90 percent in the East South Central states, and 92 percent in Mississippi. If adjustment is made for child members, over 95 percent of the church membership in Mississippi in 1957 was Protestant. Mississippi does, however, have a higher percentage of Catholic members than several of the other Southern states, including the two adjoining ones of Alabama and Arkansas.

An interesting and significant characteristic of church membership in the state is its composition. On the basis of this survey, memberships in Southern Baptist churches were equal to 34 percent of the population of the state and formed 54 percent of all church memberships.

The statistics of the National Council survey, although slightly different, are significant for comparative purposes.²⁴ Southern Baptists

²⁰*Op. cit.*

²¹The Census definition of rural and urban is followed throughout this report. Urban places have 2,500 or more population.

²²*Yearbook of American Churches for 1957*, B. Y. Landis, editor, National Council of Churches.

²³Series A, Bul. No. 4, Table 7.

²⁴Series B, Bul. Nos. 5-8.

were, of course, strongest in the South, where over 90 percent of their membership resided. The relatively strongest states for this religious body were Mississippi, Georgia, and Alabama in that order. In these three states the percent of the population who were church members and the percent that the Southern Baptists formed of church members were 36 and 62, 31 and 60, 29 and 61, respectively.

The second most dominant church in the South and in Mississippi was the Methodist. Nearly half, or 47 percent of Methodist membership, was in this region. In 1950 this region had 31 percent of the population of the nation. Nationally the Southern Baptist and Methodist made up 43 percent of all Protestants, but in the South they comprised 73 percent and in the state of Mississippi, 77 percent. Mississippi followed the Southern pattern in that Presbyterian U. S., Episcopal, Churches of Christ, and Disciples of Christ were other of the larger Protestant bodies.

It is of interest to compare the dominance of the major denomination, the Southern Baptist, in Mississippi and its similar strength in Alabama and Georgia with the dominance of other religious bodies in other states. The Southern Baptist was not as strong in Mississippi as was the Roman Catholic in certain New England states and the Latter-day Saints in the state of Utah. In New England in 1952 the Roman Catholic membership comprised over 35 percent of the population, and in Rhode Island 60 percent of the population and 77 percent of the church membership. In Utah the Latter-day Saint body had a membership equal to 66 percent of the population and formed over 90 percent of the church members.

Religious bodies which were strong nationally and in other regions but which had relatively few members in Mississippi were the several Lutheran bodies, the Jewish Congregations, the Roman and Greek Orthodox Catholic Churches, the Presbyterian U. S. A., the American Baptist Convention, and the United Church of Christ. The Disciples of Christ were relatively strong in certain other Southern states, especially Kentucky and Texas, but relatively weak in Mississippi.

Early patterns of settlement and differences of rate of growth have affected present composition of religious bodies in the state. Under Spanish and French influences the Roman Catholics were the first to establish churches in the state in the latter part of the 17th century. Baptists began establishing churches in the last decade of the 18th century, followed quickly in the first two decades of the 19th century by Methodist, Presbyterian, and Episcopalian churches. By the 1830's the Disciples of Christ and the Latter-day Saints appeared in the state.

Some factors influencing differential growth of the larger religious bodies are noted in the following sections.

AREA AND COUNTY DIFFERENCES IN CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

Areas and counties of the state varied as to rate of church membership and as to religious composition. Variations are described in this section and factors related to differences are analyzed in the following section. The rate of church membership was nearly twice as large in a group of counties in the northwest section of the state (see Figure 4 below) as in the counties in the southeast corner.²⁵ The percent church membership was three and a half times²⁶ as large in a central hill county, which had the highest rate of church membership, as in a coastal county, which had the lowest.

Counties are classified as to percent church membership in the map, Figure 1. The 27 counties ranked highest ranged from 77 to 108 percent the church memberships formed of the estimated population in 1957. The middle 26 counties ranged from 61 to 76 percent, and the lowest group, 29 counties, ranged from 29 to 60 percent. The medians²⁷ were 82, 68, and 51 percent respectively, and the median for the state, 67 percent. Counties with the highest and lowest rates of membership had some tendency to cluster in different parts of the state. The clusters of counties with low percent of membership were in the southeast and northeast. Those with highest rates of membership were found from north to south throughout the central part of the state.

Distribution of Religious Bodies

The number of religious bodies per county ranged from three to 22. Forty counties had less than eight bodies each. Another 33 coun-

²⁵Population estimates for 1957 were taken from George L. Wilber, *op. cit.*, and for 1956 from Harald A. Pedersen and Leila H. Thomas, *Estimated Population Trends in Mississippi 1950-56*, Mississippi Agricultural Experiment Station Bulletin 550, April 1957. The vital rates method of prediction was used in the first study and the Census II method in the second study. Where the two predictions were consistent with each other and with the 1950 census, the 1957 estimate was used. This was the case in 69 of the 82 counties. In 10 counties which had marked differences between the two estimates but showed the same trend, the 1956 and 1957 figures were averaged. These counties were Hancock, Harrison, Clay, DeSoto, Itawamba, Jefferson Davis, Jones, Rankin, Sharkey, and Washington. In three counties, Lafayette, Neshoba, and Oktibbeha, there was a marked difference in the two estimates showing reverse trends. On the basis of 1940 and 1950 census figures and other information, the 1957 estimates were used.

²⁶Counties are grouped together in this analysis because larger populations generally reduce error and also because important relationships are more likely to be seen. For individual county figures, see Bulletin 12-S.

²⁷The median is the "middle" value or the one with half the cases above and half below the median. In this study the median is used almost entirely as a measure of the average.

ties had from eight to 13 bodies each. The remaining nine counties had from 14 to 22 religious groups per county.

As the Southern Baptist had over half of the church membership in the state, it might well be expected that this was the largest religious body in many counties. This group had a larger number of church memberships than any other religious body in 78 counties. Methodists were the largest in two counties and Catholics, in two counties.

Southern Baptist and Methodist churches were found in all 82 counties, Presbyterian U. S. in 71, Churches of Christ in 56, Church of God (Cleveland) in 51, Episcopal in 43, Assembly of God in 41, Roman Catholic in 38, Church of God of Prophecy in 30, Church of the Nazarene in 24, and Seventh Day Adventist in 23. Fourteen or one-third of the 42 religious bodies found in the state reported churches in only one county. Another 11 were in from two to six counties.

The Ranking Counties for Largest Bodies

In 20 counties memberships of Southern Baptist churches formed 50 or more percent of the population. The highest memberships were in Simpson with 77 percent and in Choctaw with 74 percent. In 57 counties memberships of Baptist churches were from 20 to 49 percent inclusive.

In only five counties did this religious body have the rate of church membership under 20 percent. All of the counties except four of these five were in the southeast section of the state, three of them on the coast. Itawamba County, which had a Southern Baptist membership equivalent to only 4 percent of its population was the fifth county in this group. This county had a large Baptist membership, but most of it was in independent churches, some of which formerly were associated with the Southern Convention.

In five counties membership in Methodist churches formed 29 or more percent of the population. These counties were Kemper, with 38 percent; Holmes, 37 percent; Wilkinson, 35 percent; Marshall, 32 percent; and Panola, 29 percent. The two counties with the lowest Methodist membership were in the southern part of the state, Pearl River with 4 percent and Hancock with 2 percent. The other 75 counties ranged from 6 to 26 percent with one or more counties reported in each percentile falling within this range.

Roman Catholic churches were found in only 38 counties of the state. Only 14 counties had as much as 5 percent of the population accounted for by memberships in Catholic churches. Eight counties had 10 percent or more, and only one had more than 20 percent. This county was Hancock with membership in Catholic churches equivalent to 52 percent of the population.

The Presbyterian U. S. body, although it had a smaller total

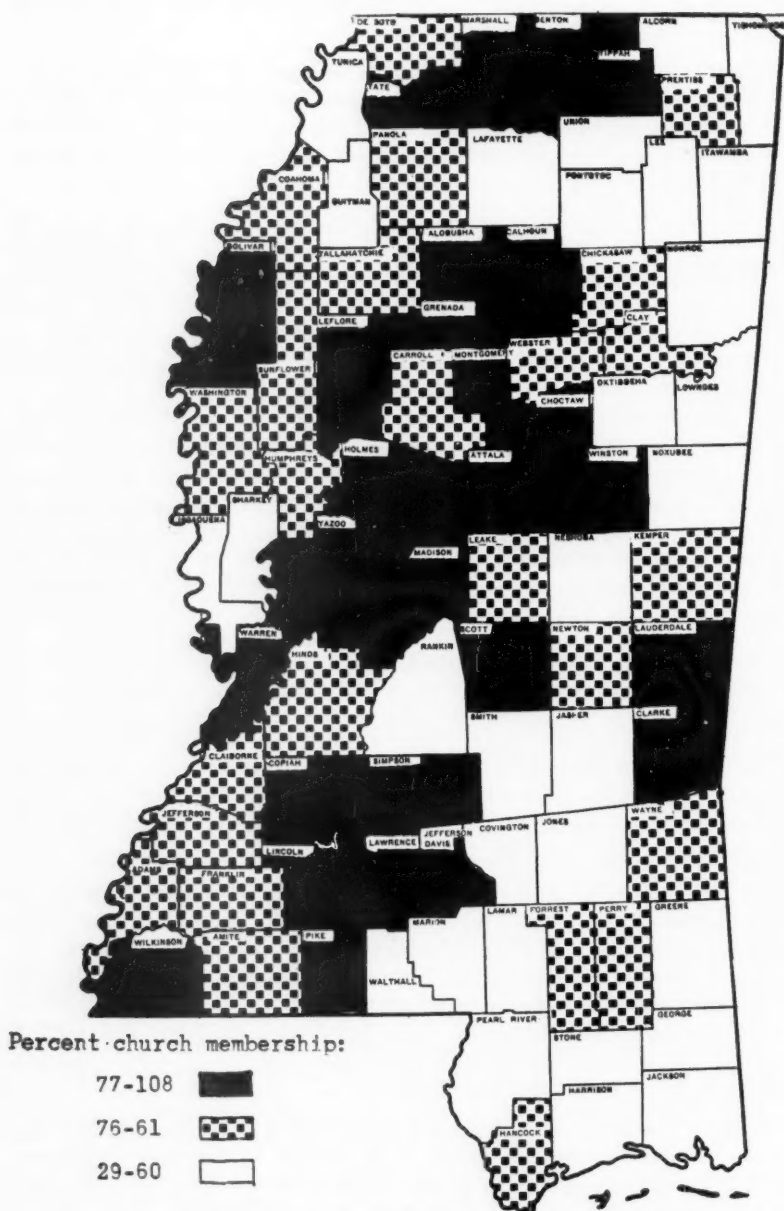


Figure 1. Classification of Mississippi Counties by Percent Church Membership Forms of the Population for 1957

membership, was much more widely distributed over the state than the Roman Catholic. In seven counties its membership rate was from 6 to 10 percent, in 22 counties 3 to 4 percent, and in 42 counties 1 to 3 percent. In 11 counties no Presbyterian U. S. churches were reported.

In the median county the rate of church membership for the Southern Baptist was 38 percent. In the median county for the Methodist the rate was 16 percent. Since only 38 counties had Roman Catholic churches reported, the rate in the median county was 0 percent. For the Presbyterian U. S. the rate in the median county was 3 percent.

The map shown in Figure 2 indicates the 15 counties in which the Southern Baptist had the largest relative membership, the 12 counties in which the Methodist had their largest, and the six counties in which the Roman Catholic had their largest.

Although there was overlapping of religious bodies for these 33 counties, this does not mean there were not counties in which two or more religious bodies were relatively strong. There were counties such as Hinds and Lauderdale in which several of the larger bodies showed above average strength. Also there were counties in which all larger bodies were relatively weak.

A significant finding was that no correlation existed between Southern Baptist strength and total church strength. That is, the Baptist group was just as likely to be in a county with low percent of total church membership as in one with high, and vice versa.

The strongest Baptist counties were in the hill sections of the state, running from Pike on the south to Benton on the north. Here is what might be termed the Baptist belt. In six counties memberships in Southern Baptist churches accounted for 80 percent or more of all church memberships.²⁸ Walthall was the highest with 89 percent. In the median county 60 percent of the church memberships were in churches affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention. Sixty-two counties had 50 percent or more of the memberships affiliated with this religious body. In only three counties was the percent below 30. These were Harrison with 28, Itawamba with 18, and Hancock with 10.

Strong Methodist counties, although found chiefly in the north central part of the state, were more widely dispersed. The strongest Catholic counties were either on the coast or on the Mississippi River.

As might be expected, the Baptist and Methodist were more evenly distributed over the state than were the other bodies. The Roman

²⁸This is a second type of church membership rate used. This one is based on total church memberships and not population total.

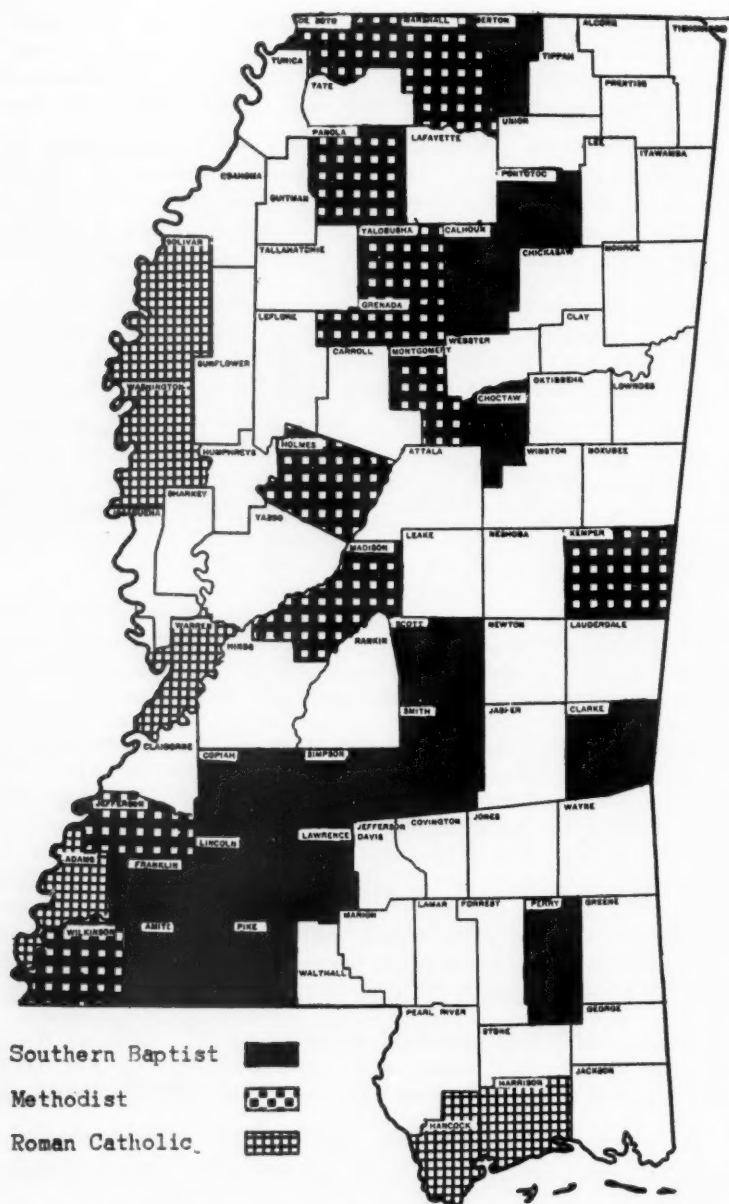


Figure 2. Counties in Which Southern Baptist, Methodist, and Roman Catholic Have the Highest Proportion of Church Members for the Respective Body.

Catholic was widely scattered; the Presbyterian U. S. was intermediate between Baptist, Methodist, and Catholic.²⁹

Distribution of Other Bodies

As noted above, the smaller bodies were found in fewer counties than were the larger ones. Some of the smaller bodies were distributed over the state while others were highly concentrated in certain sections. Presbyterian U. S. bodies were widely distributed over the state. The 11 counties without Presbyterian churches, as well as those with only 1 percent or less of the population accounted for by Presbyterian memberships, were in all sections of the state. Although they had a much smaller number of churches, both the Protestant Episcopal and Disciples of Christ were distributed over the state.

By contrast, churches belonging to the North American Baptist Association and the Churches of Christ were more highly concentrated in certain sections. The North American Baptist body was found largely in the southeastern part of the state, centering in Jones and adjoining counties. The Churches of Christ, although found in 56 counties, were concentrated in the northern part of the state, especially in the northeast. In the early 1950's, 40 percent of the Churches of Christ in Mississippi reporting were located in nine counties in the northeastern part of the state. In this same section were found relatively large groups of independent Baptists.

Rural and Urban Distribution

Church membership was classified in the survey made by the National Council of Churches by whether or not the church reporting was located in a metropolitan area, places under 2,500 and open country, or intermediate size centers. Such a classification of church membership for Mississippi is presented in Table 2. In 1952, 8 percent of all the church memberships for all the bodies reporting were found in Jackson churches, 64 percent in other centers over 2,500, and 28 percent in smaller towns and in the open country. By contrast, only 5 percent of the population was in Jackson, 26 percent in the other larger centers, and 69 percent in the smaller towns and open country. These differences in percent distribution for the total population and for church memberships are likely accounted for largely by the fact that persons in the open country and smaller places have their church membership in

²⁹A measure of variability for all church bodies in the four largest groups was obtained by dividing the mean variation from the median by the median and multiplying by 100. The index number obtained was 14 for all bodies, 24 for Southern Baptists, 29 for Methodists, 79 for Presbyterians, and 320 for Roman Catholics.

towns of over 2,500. The membership rate might also be higher for persons residing in places over 2,500 than elsewhere. Evidence, however, is not conclusive on this point. If a difference does exist, it is probably a moderate one.³⁰

Table 2. Distribution of White Population^a and Membership of larger Religious Bodies^b as to Location of Churches in Jackson, Other Centers over 2,500, and Smaller Towns and Open Country.

Group	Total No. of Persons	Percent in		
		Jackson	Other Centers Over 2,500	Smaller Towns & Open Country
Total White Population ^a	1,188,632	5	26	69
All Bodies	738,028	8	64	28
Southern Baptist	421,806	7	60	33
Methodist	178,708	9	60	31
Roman Catholic	53,553	8	90	3
Presbyterian U. S.	31,485	15	65	20
Episcopal	13,567	16	76	8
Disciples of Christ	9,169 ^c	17	71	12
Jewish Congregations	2,456	14	86	0

^a1950 Census of Population.

^bNational Council of Churches, New York, Bulletin Series E, No. 3, Table 142. Statistics are for 1952.

^cIncludes some Negro membership. Percent rural might be even less if these were omitted.

In Table 2, marked difference is seen between the several religious bodies with respect to the percent of memberships in churches in places under 2,500 and those larger. The most rural groups were Southern Baptist and Methodist, followed by the Presbyterian U. S. and Disciples of Christ. By contrast, none of the Jewish Congregations was located in centers under 2,500, and only 8 percent of the membership of Episcopal churches was found in places of this size. The several religious bodies presented in Table 2 differ nationally and Southwide with respect to rural-urban distribution in the same way as indicated for Mississippi. Jewish Congregations, Roman Catholic, and Protestant Episcopal are urban groups. Nationally 97.5 percent and for the South 94 percent of Jewish memberships were in congregations located in metropolitan areas and none were in places under 2,500 and the open

³⁰See Raymond Payne, *op. cit.*, and Raymond Payne and Harold F. Kaufman, *op. cit.* Rate of church membership reported in these bulletins for rural people was similar to that found for the state as a whole. See also Table 3 below.

country. By contrast, Southern Baptist, Disciples of Christ, and Methodist in the South had only a third of their memberships in metropolitan areas, one-half in intermediate centers, and a sixth in smaller places and the open country.³¹

As indicated above, the Southern Baptist body appeared to be more rural than other bodies. This is borne out in an analysis of the percent that Baptist memberships formed of the total membership for 1957 by the rurality of the county. The 82 counties are classified below as to percent of population urban in 1950, and the percent that Southern Baptists formed of the total membership in the median county for 1957. All of the counties except two which had towns over 5,000 had a considerably lower percent of Baptists than the average.

Number of Counties	Percent of Population Urban	Percent Baptists in Median County
82	31	60
38	None	66
10	1-19	61
19	20-39	56
9	40-59	48
6	60 & over	37

Change in Rate of Church Membership

The number of church memberships by county for the four largest bodies for 1926 was obtained from the religious census. Thus a basis for comparing the total of the four bodies and each body for 1926 and 1957 was possible. In order that the computation would not be affected by changing population, membership rates were computed for each year. The statistic used was the difference in membership rate between 1926 and 1957.

The median change was an increase of membership rate of 19.5 percent from 1926 to 1957. As shown in Figure 3, 29 counties had 26 to 58 percent increase in rate, 29 counties 13 to 25 percent increase, and 24 counties ranged from a 17 percent decrease to a 12 percent increase. Nine counties had lower rates of church membership in 1957 than in 1926. All of these except one, Itawamba, were located in the southern part of the state.

Change for the Southern Baptist body from 1926 to 1957 ranged from a loss of 13 percent to a gain of 46 percent. The median county had an increase of 18 percent. Only four counties had a lower proportion of Southern Baptist in 1957 than in 1926.

The change in rate for the Methodist was from an increase of 16 percent to a decrease of 9 percent for this same period. The median

³¹National Council of Churches, Bulletin Series E, No. 1, Table 140.

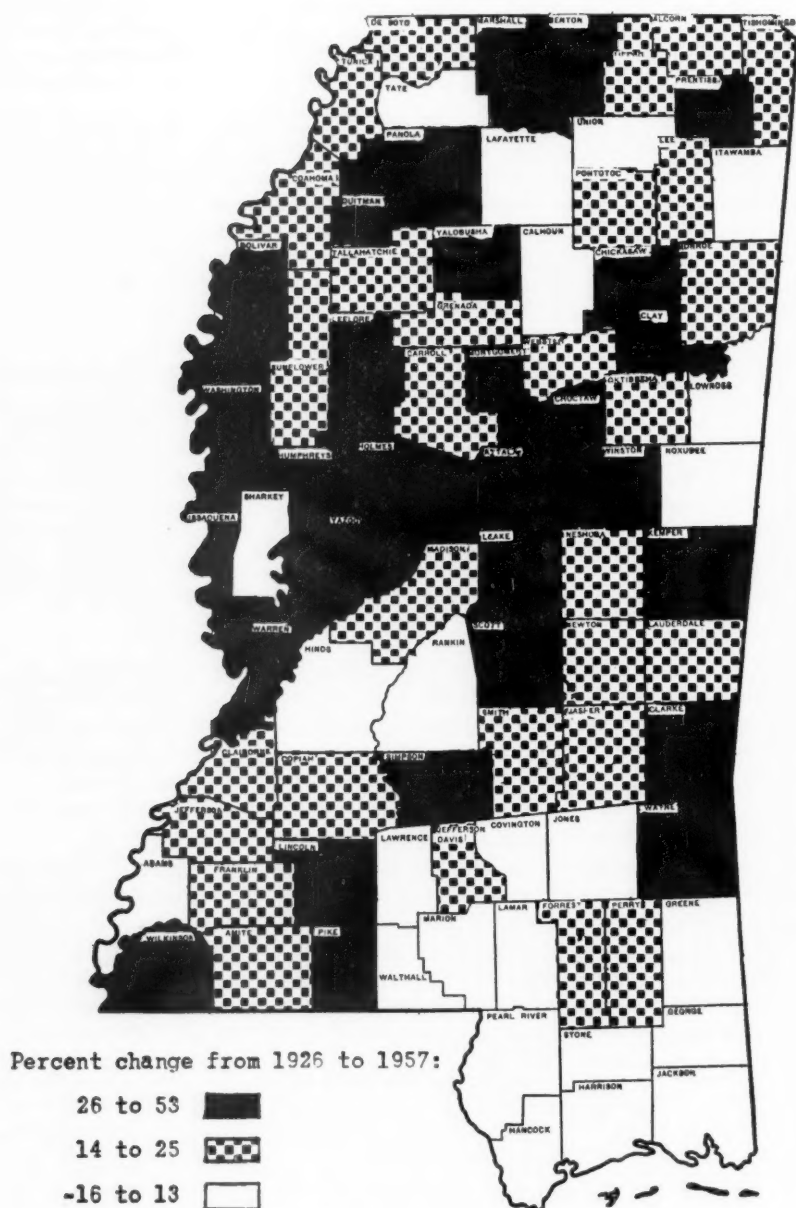


Figure 3. Changes in Church Membership Rates, 1926 to 1957, for Total of Three Religious Bodies.

county had an increase of 2 percent in Methodist membership. The Presbyterian U. S. body had a range of from 4 percent increase to a 2 percent decrease. In the median county for the Presbyterian the percent that this body formed of the population was the same for the two years.

As stated above, Catholics were found in 38 counties in 1957. In these counties the change in church membership rate ranged from an increase of 16 percent to a decrease of 8 percent. The median county showed an increase of 1 percent in Catholic membership.

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS AFFECTING CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

Factors examined as influencing rates of church membership were (1) social and economic level, especially amount of schooling, (2) the extent of population change, and (3) the strength of religious organization. In this analysis a sample of 1675 adults is first presented and then the factors conditioning membership are studied with the 82 counties of the state as the unit of analysis.

Characteristics of Church Members

Some pertinent characteristics of church members in the state were observed from a study of a sample of 1675 rural Mississippi adults. The surveys were made during the period 1949-56. The population is described in Table 3, which also gives names of the sample counties, number of persons surveyed, and year of survey.

In Table 3, 1675 adults were classified into four groups: those lacking church membership, comprising 17 percent; those who did not attend a fourth of the time and were classified as inactive, 21 percent; those active but not holding an office in the church at the time, 49 percent; and persons active and holding an office, 13 percent.

In this table the degree of church activity is related to years of schooling, occupation of head of household, and socio-economic score of the household. These measures of education and economic position are seen to be highly related to degree of church activity. For example, 90 percent of the college graduates were active in church, as compared with only 49 percent of those persons with less than eight years of schooling. Fifty-nine percent of the college graduates held an office in the church as compared with only 5 percent of the group with the least schooling. The occupational classification follows the same kind of relationship with the professional group being most active and unskilled workers, farm laborers, and unemployed the least so. The socio-econo-

Table 3. Selected Characteristics of Church Officers, Active Members, Inactive Members, and Nonmembers in a Sample Population of 1675 Rural Mississippi Adults^a for the Period 1949-56.

Item	Degree of Church Activity, Percent					
	Number of Persons	Total Active	No Membership	Inactive	Active No Office	Active with Office
All Persons	1675	62	17	21	49	13
Years of Schooling ^b						
16 and over	49	90	4	6	33	57
13-15	115	77	7	16	50	27
12	277	75	9	16	53	22
9-11	421	70	11	19	60	10
8	357	56	19	25	46	10
0-7	445	48	28	24	43	5
Occupation of Head ^c						
Professional	48	90	8	2	42	48
Business Owner	51	78	6	16	64	14
Manager and Clerk	172	72	12	16	54	18
Farm Owner						
(Over 99 acres)	212	68	14	18	49	19
Farm Owner						
(Under 99 acres)	281	66	16	18	53	13
Skilled	352	65	16	19	53	12
Protective Service	29	59	3	38	31	28
Unskilled	76	57	21	22	50	7
Farm Renter and Sharecropper	239	47	32	21	41	6
Unemployed	142	46	17	37	39	7
Farm Laborer	20	45	20	35	45	—
Socio-Economic Score						
82-91	380	88	4	8	58	30
72-81	496	69	13	18	56	13
62-71	441	59	18	23	51	8
52-61	249	37	31	32	34	3
39-51	109	20	40	40	20	—
Sex						
Female	867	68	10	22	56	12
Male	808	57	24	19	42	15
Residence						
Town	398	69	9	22	51	18
Open Country	1277	61	19	20	49	12

^aThe year the survey was made and the number of persons involved in each survey for the six counties in the sample study are as follows:

Alcorn—302 persons in 1955 and 1956
 Bolivar—155 persons in 1950
 Choctaw—303 persons in 1949
 Forrest—292 persons in 1950
 Lee—284 persons in 1949
 Scott—339 persons in 1953

^bOf the total 1675 persons, 11 are unascertained for Years of Schooling.

^cOf the total 1675 persons, 53 are unascertained for Occupation of Head.

mic³² score for the household indicates the same kind of relationship. Eighty-eight percent of persons in households with the highest score were active in church as compared with only 20 percent of persons in households with the lowest score.

As seen in Table 3, women were slightly more active in church but the men were more likely to hold office.

Persons living in towns (all were under 2,500) were more likely to be active in church and to hold an office than were individuals living in the open country. In the towns 91 percent of the adults reported church membership as compared with 81 percent of those in the open country.

A Complex of Factors Influence Rate

The rate of church membership appears to be influenced by several interrelated conditions. Evidence to support this position comes from the analysis in this study of Mississippi church membership, from a similar study by the author in Kentucky³³, and from findings on factors influencing participation from the general literature. Three conditions or factors are noted, namely, social and economic level, strength of religious organization, and movement of population.

The hypothesis proposed here is that (1) a high social and economic level, (2) strong religious organization, and (3) a stable population all promote high rates of church membership.³⁴ In the Kentucky study the three conditions just noted were found positively associated in a large grouping of contiguous counties. In the Bluegrass Counties of central Kentucky the social and economic level was relatively high, religious organization strong, and population relatively stable. In the Cumberland Plateau Counties in the southeast part of the state the reverse was true—relatively low social and economic level, weak religious

³²Socio-economic level is a composite of several items or characteristics. These include education, participation in church and Sunday school, the size and construction of house, the possession of such consumption items as an automobile, electricity, and running water. As these items have been found to be highly correlated, a scale which combines several has been employed and each household is given a score. See William H. Sewell, "A Short Form of the Socio-Economic Scale," *Rural Sociology*, Volume 8, Number 2, June, 1943.

³³Harold F. Kaufman, *Religious Organization in Kentucky*, Kentucky Agricultural Experiment Station Bulletin 524, August 1948.

³⁴A fourth factor in influencing variation in rates of membership reported is error in enumeration—over and underenumeration. This is the major reason why more powerful methods of correlation were not used than comparing distribution by range and medians.

organization, and rapidly increasing population. Rates of church membership were over three times higher in the Bluegrass than in the mountain plateau.

At least two patterns of factors are to be noted among the approximately one-fourth of Mississippi counties which reported a church membership rate of 80 percent or more in 1957. One grouping of counties, similar to those in Kentucky, had relatively stable populations, average or higher income, and an indication of relatively strong religious organization. On the other hand, another grouping ranked low in income and had a rapidly declining population but still had high rates of church membership. In this latter grouping it is likely that overenumeration was one factor contributing to the high membership rates.

Likewise two patterns, neither similar to the one noted in Kentucky, are to be seen among the counties with the lowest percent of church membership. In one, income was relatively high and religious organization relatively strong, but population growth was rapid. In the other the reverse was true with respect to all three conditions.

Although relations are not as clearcut as in Kentucky some supporting evidence exists in Mississippi data that high socio-economic level, strong organization, and stable population promote high rates of church membership. Some evidence has been given above and other is presented and interpreted below. The Mississippi pattern differs from the Kentucky one in that the conditioning factors are not all either highly favorable or unfavorable, but rather one may be favorable, another unfavorable, and the third neutral. Thus one factor counteracts another as in the case of high socio-economic level with a highly unstable, rapidly growing population.³⁵

Social and Economic Level

A high correlation was shown above for the sample of Mississippi adults concerning the relation of active church membership and education, social and economic rank, and occupation. This relationship between social and economic level and church membership has been found repeatedly in studies of town and country populations. The relationship is even greater for other than religious organizations.³⁶

When groupings of people, however, such as county populations, are compared rather than individuals, the relationship between social and economic level and church participation is not as clear many

³⁵Error in enumeration presents a further complication in explaining variation in membership rates. The difficulty here is that the amount of error is unknown and it likely varies greatly from county to county.

³⁶See Payne and Kaufman, *op. cit.*

times because each population contains the various levels. The more homogeneous populations were with respect to income, the greater would be the expected relationship between income and church participation.

The only measure of social and economic level that was available in this study for all counties was the median income for families and individuals for 1949.³⁷ Distributions of the counties on percent of the population holding church membership were studied by the five income classes, with the lowest being \$500-\$999 and the highest \$2,500 and over. No relationship was observed between the rate of church membership and income. The median county in the lowest income class had 68 percent church membership as did the median county in the highest income class.

The most plausible interpretation of this finding is not that social and economic level does not influence church membership rates, but rather that other factors, namely population change and in some cases strength of religious organization in the county, have counteracted the influence which the social and economic factors might have exerted. This is illustrated by the finding that Southern Baptists and Churches of Christ, which have a relatively high rate of growth (an index of strong religious organization as the term is used here), are concentrated in rural counties with the lowest income.

Strength of Religious Organization

Organizational strength is expressed through the adequacy and activity of ministerial and lay leadership, through the extent and variety of a church's programs, and through its effectiveness in gaining new members. Unfortunately, no direct measure of the organizational strength of churches in several counties was obtained in this study. Thus strength of religious organization is gained only by inference based on the relative percent of the population that were church members at the two given periods, 1926 and 1957, the change in this percentage, and on indication of overenumeration of memberships.³⁸ For example, Pike County had a composite index which indicated relatively strong re-

³⁷J. V. D. Saunders, et al., *Mississippi's Counties, Some Social and Economic Aspects*, Second Edition, Mississippi Agricultural Experiment Station, Sociology and Rural Life Series No. 6, November 1957, Table 24, pp. 68-74. Statistics were computed from the 1950 U. S. Census.

³⁸On first glance it may appear that circular reasoning is involved here, i. e., high membership rates associated with high membership rates, but this is not necessarily the case. The inference as to strong religious organization was based on five different types of indices or observations of which rate in 1957 was only one. Counties existed with relatively high rates in 1957 but were not favorable on the other four indices.

ligious organization. In 1926 Pike County had a church membership rate of 59 percent, considerably above the average. From 1926 to 1957 the rate increased by 40 percent so that in 1957 it was 99 percent. Each of the four major denominations was stronger in this county than in the average.

As stated above, a number of counties entirely rural in population and at the lowest income level appeared to have relatively strong religious organization. These counties also had marked decline in population. Thus the likely overenumeration of church membership, added to an already substantial rate, resulted in the fact that low income and high church membership were associated in some counties.

Population Change and Church Membership Rates

As church membership lags behind population change, resulting in over and underenumeration, population change is as important as any other factor in this study in explaining differences in church membership rates. Approximately half the counties lost population during the 30-year period and half of them gained. From 1926 to 1957 ten counties increased in population from 96 to 237 percent. At the other extreme, 14 lost from 19 to 39 percent of their population.

A modest relationship was observed between change in population for the 30-year period and the percent church membership in 1957. For example, the median county of the group of ten counties that had at least doubled in population had a membership rate of 54 percent as compared with 77 percent for the 14 counties which had the greatest loss in population for the same period.

Data in Table 4 show that the greatest increase in the rate of church membership for 1926-57 is reported for those counties which had the greatest decline in population for this period. During this time 14 counties lost from 19 to 39 percent of their population. In the median county of this group the rate of church membership increased by 29.5 percent. That is, the membership rate for this group of counties averaged approximately 80 percent in 1957.

In contrast, ten counties which had the highest rate of gain in population for the period 1926-57 had a median county gain in church membership of only 7.5 percent. Four of the ten counties, all in the southern part of the state, had a lower rate of church membership in 1957 than in 1926.

The same kind of relationship between change in rate of church membership and population change was found for the largest religious body, the Southern Baptist.

Table 4. Percent Population Change for Period 1926-57 Related to Percent of Change in Church Membership of Four Religious Bodies^a for the Same Period for Mississippi's Counties.

Percent Population Change ^b Grouping	No. of Counties	Percent Church Membership Change				
		Under 10	10-19	20-29	30 & Over	Median County
Total	82	26	24	30	20	17.5
-19 to -39	14	7	29	14	50	29.5
-6 to -17	18	6	33	50	11	21.5
5 to -5	14	29	7	36	29	26
7 to 19	15	20	33	40	7	19
27 to 60	11	55	18	18	9	9
96 to 234	10	60	20	10	10	7.5

^aSouthern Baptist, Methodist, Roman Catholic, and Presbyterian U. S.

^bNumbers below show actual range of each class; gaps in class intervals mean that no cases of the particular values concerned were found.

Rural-Urban Influences

The influence of urbanization on membership rate is indirect and its results are mixed. It is indirect in that it affects the rate of church membership through the three major factors considered here. It is mixed in that it influences these factors to work in opposite directions. Urbanization generally brings a higher social and economic level, but at the same time rapid population increase. The influence on church organization is likewise possibly a mixed one. With greater resources and population, churches in urban areas have better trained leadership and more extensive programs. On the other hand, a smaller proportion of the population is likely to have membership in the local churches than where the population has remained stable.

Thus, as might be expected, no relationship whatsoever was observed between total church membership and the degree of urbanization of a county. As stated above, the median county had a membership rate of 67 percent, and the median for the six counties with 60 percent urban population was 67, as was the median for the 38 counties with no urban population.

Although no relationship existed between total church membership rate and degree of urbanization, such a relationship did exist for individual religious bodies. The dominant religious body, Southern Baptist, is a case in point. Even though this body made its greatest gains in the entirely rural counties, the increase in rate of church membership for urban counties was also substantial. Thus as the population of the state becomes more and more urban, it appears likely that the Southern Baptist body will hold its own, although it may not gain on

the other groups as much as it has in the past because of the rapid decline of population in rural counties where this group is strongest.

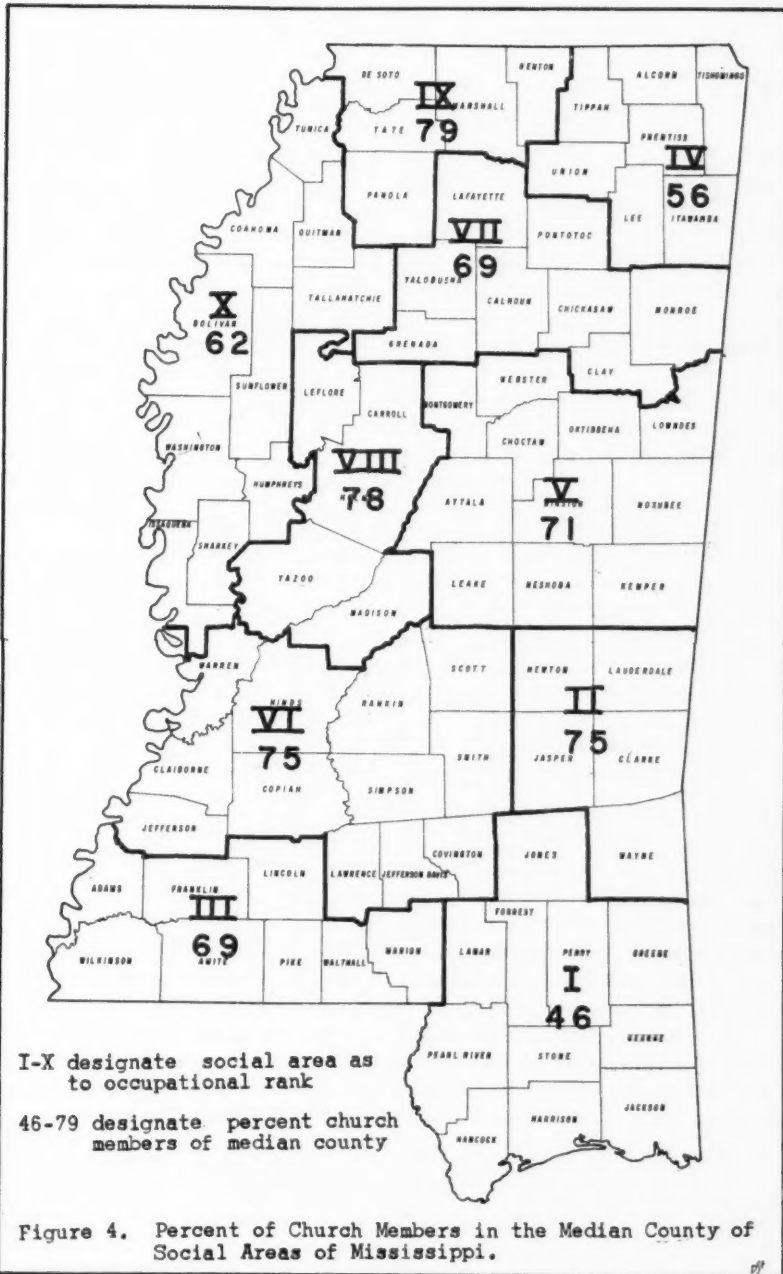
Although no correlation was found with membership rate, a definite relationship was shown between the number of religious bodies and the proportion of urban population in the county. The median number for the six counties with over 60 percent urban population was 17 as compared with a median of only six for the 38 all-rural counties. Counties with an intermediate rural population fell in between these numbers in the number of religious bodies.

Church Membership and Social Areas of the State

The map in Figure 4 presents social areas of the state with the percent of church membership in the median county. The areas were delineated on the basis of a number of social and economic factors.³⁹ A dominant one was the type of employment—agricultural and non-agricultural. Closely related with this was the percent of the population nonwhite. The more agricultural an area, the larger the nonwhite population. The areas are ranked, as indicated by the Roman numerals, from that with the greatest nonagricultural employment, I, to the one with the least, X.

As noted above, several social, economic, and population factors sometimes counterbalance each other in influencing church membership so that variations are not as great as otherwise. Figure 4 represents a graphic summarization of the complex of factors as related to extent of membership. Some variation is to be noted. Highest rates are seen in areas IX, VIII, VI, and II. Lowest rates are noted in I, IV, and X.

³⁹J. S. Bang, *The Delineation of Rural Social Areas of Mississippi*, Master's Thesis, Mississippi State College, June 1957. See this study, p. 44, for a list of factors. Slight adjustment of the original delineation was made in the map on Figure 4.



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Blue Mountain College

The Grapes Of Wrath

Reconsidered

Some observations on John Steinbeck and the "religion" of secularism

John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* is, of course, vintage of 1939; and now that the wine has aged for twenty years it reveals underlying flavors that in the first flush of discovery were overlooked. Since some of these flavors have a noticable acerbity, suggestive less of grape than of green persimmon, and since they have undoubtedly been there from the beginning, it is a bit surprising that they should have been so long neglected. Yet the flavor, the "meaning" of a book is not absolute or unalterable. The residue of experience that a reader brings away *now* from *The Grapes of Wrath* may be, must be, different from that in 1939, when the naturalism of Zola and Frank Norris still carried prestige, and when the memory of the evils of the Great Depression focused in brilliant bitter light Steinbeck's indictment of social injustice.

The Grapes of Wrath still fulfills, of course, its original twofold function as naturalistic novel and social tract. In the former function, it subjects its people (in Frank Norris's words) to "terrible things," from Tom Joad's return to an abandoned home to the stillbirth of Rosasharn's "blue shriveled little mummy." In the latter, it dramatizes the terrible plight of tenant families who have been "tractored out"; it

exposes a system of land monopoly as destructive as any set forth in *Progress and Poverty*; it holds our gaze unsparingly on the tragic attrition of the Joads as a family unit. Truly, "there is a crime here that goes beyond denunciation. There is a sorrow here that weeping cannot symbolize. There is a failure here that topples all our successes."

Now a book meant to expose a "crime . . . that goes beyond denunciation" is likely to be, in the biblical sense, a parable. Its events are made to happen not as they might happen actually, but as they may best carry conviction for the author's case. Its people, while they sometimes act as individuals, at other times act as types or symbols, as do the figures in a medieval morality play. In much of Steinbeck's story, Tom Joad is just the individual man Tom Joad; toward the close he becomes an embodiment — a self-conscious, highly articulate embodiment — of the workingman's resistance to injustice everywhere. *The Grapes of Wrath* is not, then, a realistic novel, though it makes occasional use of the techniques of realism. It is a parable; and toward the reader's full realization of the meanings of that parable are directed Steinbeck's unusual talents as a maker of myth.

I have purposely said "meanings," not "meaning," since *The Grapes of Wrath* is in intent not single but multiple. It is more than a naturalistic novel, more than a social tract; it is anything but "simple and uncomplicated," as an early critic incautiously called it. Its social idealism, even, appears sometimes as only an outer layer, the exterior label on a package whose inner core is something else entirely; and in the making of books there is of course no pure-food-and-drug act to require that the contents correspond to the label. Along with its concern for social justice, *The Grapes of Wrath* actually imparts significances that have nothing at all to do with social justice, but that nevertheless remain with the reader as part of his residue of experience. With the aid of twenty years' perspective, we can, and should, inquire just what are these interior meanings.

Among these meanings — meanings, let us repeat, not organically necessary to the social message of the novel — is the illustration of a kind of secular religion, whose Messiah is the ex-Holiness preacher Jim Casy. Casy of course, modestly disclaims Messiahship, but his very disclaimer is ingeniously made to set forth Steinbeck's own Messianic intention in creating him. "I ain't sayin' I'm like Jesus . . .," Casy is made to observe. "But I got tired like Him, an' I got mixed up like Him, an' I went into the wilderness like Him." Though Steinbeck is misreporting the New Testament story when he refers to Jesus as "mixed up," the thrice-stated parallel is of course emphatic enough. The same parallel extends through Casy's offering himself in place of Tom Joad to the law, and even to the words Casy speaks to his killers: "You don't know what you're a-doin'."

If in Jim Casy Steinbeck makes use of the story of the Christ, the theology and ethic of Casy's religion have little enough to do with

Christianity. Contrary to Christian dualism, man and man's world are looked on, Transcendental fashion, as part of one great Soul, universally holy except when some "mis' able little fella" acts in arrogant self-assertion to "bust the holiness." Contrary to the Christian attitudes of moral selectiveness and self-discipline, in Steinbeck's secular religion there is no need for self-control; all is permitted. To act ethically, men have only to act naturally. They have only to forget the illusion of sin, practice a universal tolerance, and obey that impulse. According to the newly tolerant Casey, "There ain't no sin and there ain't no virtue. There's just stuff people do." And according to his interpreter Ma Joad, "What people does is right to do."

Steinbeck's secular religion is not, to put it mildly, much turned toward self-discipline. It sanctions any simple, easy, and natural indulgence. His Casey plans to cuss and swear and to "lay in the grass, open an' honest," with anybody that will have him. His folk find their pleasurable indulgences in storytelling, in an occasional movie, in dancing, in folk music made by fiddle and guitar and harmonica, in the softened, dreamlike world of a gentle drunkenness. They find them, above all, in sex, a simple natural appetite that involves no responsibilities for possible children or for the feelings of one's sexual partner. Once, to be sure, Steinbeck does waver in his uncompromising stand for sexual irresponsibility. According to the customs spontaneously formed in the roadside "worlds" of the migrants, "a man might not have one girl one night and another the next," for that would endanger the "worlds." But this falling-off from consistency is minor. Later, in his genial attitude toward Al Joad's promiscuity, Steinbeck makes it clear enough that a man may properly have one girl one *week* and another the next.

Sex, then, in the Steinbeckian ethic, means simply promiscuity in its simplest and easiest expression. Sexual behaviour with which Steinbeck is sympathetic is that of Tom Joad, who came out of prison "smokin'," found a "hoor girl," and "run her down . . . like she was a rabbit." Or it is that of Grampa's brother, who, if he got "any kids, cuckoo'd 'em, an' somebody else is a-raisin' 'em." Or it is that of Al Joad, whose tomcatting is described with humorous tolerance. The inevitable result of sexual maturity is not, of course, marriage; it is fornication. "It ain't Aggie's fault," says her father, of her relations with Al Joad. "She's growed up."

Now this picture of human mating, curiously simple and sometimes unintentionally humorous, is not employed by Steinbeck as mere shock material, or as a new version of the pleasant rascalities of the picaresque novel, still less as a realistic study of Sex among the Okies. It is part of a persistently held philosophy, according to which the only values lie in the experiences of the moment, the only valid end of living is the continued renewing of the life of the life cells. The same nonteleological outlook appears, for example, in books as different otherwise as *Tortilla Flat* and *The Wayward Bus*; and it glows into unusual sharp-

ness in *Burning Bright*, which sanctions the murder of a man who has fulfilled his seminal function. Looked at from this nonteleological viewpoint, the experiencing of sex unavoidably loses its special human meanings and becomes, not merely primitive, not merely promiscuous, but simply animal.

Now a few of Steinbeck's critics, notably John S. Kennedy, have observed his fondness for animalism: the majority have missed it entirely — a failure of perception the more conspicuous for the fact that Steinbeck took pains to write into *The Grapes of Wrath* a brief sub-parable of free and natural sex behaviour:

A committee of dogs had met in the road, in honor of a bitch. Five males, shepherd mongrels, collie mongrels, dogs whose breeds had been blurred by a freedom of social life, were engaged in complimenting the bitch. For each dog sniffed daintily and then stalked to a cotton stalk on stiff legs . . . Joad . . . laughed joyously. "By God!" he said. "By God!" . . . One dog mounted and, now that it was accomplished, the others gave way and watched with interest, and their tongues were out, and their tongues dripped.

A reader who really "buys" *The Grapes of Wrath* has bought, it would seem, something besides a plea for social justice. He has in fact bought an elaborately illustrated and reiterated philosophy of casual sex indulgence. He has also bought, along with a concept of sexual promiscuity, a humorous tolerance of the Tobacco-Road way of life once enjoyed by the Joads in Oklahoma. The reader's affections are to embrace Granma, who in a fit of religious ecstasy has ripped one of her husband's buttocks nearly off with a shotgun blast. They are to embrace even more warmly Grampa, who insists on going about with his fly open, and who, choked at table, sprays into his lap a "mouthful of paste." They are to embrace a social group where it is natural enough for a woman "in a family way" to go raving because the pig got in the house and "et the baby."

The reader's affections are to embrace also a language employed, not precisely for vulgarity, but for apparently calculated effects of shock and revulsion. Now the mere amount and proportion of obscene language in *The Grapes of Wrath* are not, to be sure, especially high. Pungent Saxon monosyllables are much scarcer there than in the casual talk of schoolboys, where the same words are taken for granted and make little or no impression. But in *The Grapes of Wrath* these identical words seem more objectionable because the writer's imagination has so joined fact and idea, and image and word, as to startle the reader into aversion or even nausea. When Tom Joad is hungry he is given — as an appetizer? — the line, "My guts is yellin' bloody murder."

Irritated by a truck-driver's curiosity, he is made to express his annoyance by saying, "You're wettin' your pants to know what I done."

To this vulgarity in deed and word the reader of *The Grapes of Wrath* has been expected, for twenty years, to grant approval or at least entire tolerance. Yet the pertinent critical questions suggested by it have hardly been asked, still less answered. It hardly seems in point to ask whether Steinbeck's dialogue is really the language of the California migrants, since after all his book is not realism but social parable. It would be more in point to ask whether the vulgarity contributes anything to the parable — anything, that is, beyond the linking of the book with the established popularity of the *Tobacco Road* theme. It would be more in point to inquire, apropos of Steinbeck's pungent language, into our different mental responses to a certain act, to the *spoken* word that designates it, and to the *written* word; for acts that are in themselves natural and inoffensive may be brought into offensive prominence by the connotations of a spoken word or by the bold black and white of the printed page. And if the act itself is repellent, the spoken word may be pointlessly nauseating. It is one thing to have the reader know that Tom Joad has killed a man in self defense; it is quite another — especially for any reader who has witnessed violent death — to have Tom observe with relish that he knocked the man's head "plumb to squash."

Now if reader and critic have largely overlooked these questions, and if they have really taken at face value Steinbeck's tolerant instruction that "what people does is right to do," and if they then take a good, straight, hard look at Steinbeck's pages, they are likely to be disconcerted to find that to Steinbeck some things are not "right" at all; to find, instead, that his pages are sown with emotionally charged moral judgments and sometimes virulent with hatred. Among the things that are emphatically not "right" is the practice of religion, specifically of Christianity. Although no such presentation is needful for Steinbeck's social ends, Christianity appears in *The Grapes of Wrath* only in the dubious form of certain Holinist sects; and even these are made visible only through a poisonous aura of hostile connotation.

For religion, as Steinbeck allows his readers to see it, is the ridiculous thing that causes Pa Joad to hurt his leg "Jesus-jumpin'," or that wrings out of Granma her shrill and terrible cry, "Pu-raise Gawd for vittory." It is the malignant force that drives the howling Mrs. Sandry to try to break Rosasharn's spirit, that impels preachers to make their people "grovel and whine on the ground." It is the source-spring of the intolerance which, when the dance is held at the government labor camp, makes the "Jesus lovers" sit with "hard condemning faces" and "watch the sin." Nowhere in *The Grapes of Wrath*, either in these episodes or elsewhere, does Steinbeck reveal any genuine knowledge of Christianity or any other of the great world religions. His approach to religion cannot therefore be that of the informed unbeliever or the

genuine intellectual. Instead, he attacks religion by attaching to it belittling labels and emotion-triggering stimuli. He undercuts it by associating it with psychological illness, with morbid sexuality, with the practice of fanatical absurdities. He employs, in brief, the methods of the political demagogue, oblivious of the fact that demagoguery is no less demagogic for using the printed page instead of the political platform.

Apparently, after all, not *everything* that people do is right to do. Some things, such as keeping up any organized forms of religion, are quite seriously wrong; and one evil, especially, is the most seriously wrong of all. To Steinbeck, the deadliest of the deadly sins is simply being a typical American citizen — that is, a member of the middle classes. Hatred of the middle classes is in fact, according to Steinbeck's secretary Tony Seixas, one of the main "clues" to the understanding of his fiction. But quite apart from her testimony, the fiction itself carries abundant evidence of Steinbeck's feeling. Repeatedly it attacks the middle class not by direct invective or rational illustration, but by the insidious propaganda devices of epithet, innuendo, and hostile connotation.

To illustrate: — In *The Grapes of Wrath* a child is killed on Highway 66 by a recklessly driven Cadillac. Prosperous owners of Cadillacs, Steinbeck implies, have a way of killing small children, whereas the Okie driver of a battered pick-up only tries, unsuccessfully, to run down a cat. Proletarian talk — that about the woman back home who "had a nigger kid all of a sudden" — is presented as natural and wholesomely robust. Capitalists' talk — that about the movie actress with a venereal disease — is presented as unwholesome gossip. The middle-class stooge who sells under-par hamburger to Ma Joad is presented as a neurotic who "giggled softly." Salesmen in a used-car lot, watching their victim-customers with "small, intent" eyes, are "neat" and "deadly." A California landholder is a "fat, sof' fella with little mean eyes" California deputies, servants of the middle class, are "fat-assed men with guns slung on fat hips."

Of this insidious denigration of the middle classes, the core is the description of the people who ride the "big cars" on Highway 66. The women, who to another writer would be just women, become in Steinbeck's imagination "languid, heat-raddled ladies," who require a thousand accoutrements to freshen their faces, to move their bowels, and to keep their sexual life "safe and unproductive"; ladies who in the midst of all these luxuries remain weary, discontented, and sullen. Their companions, suitable mates, are "little, pot-bellied men . . . , clean, pink men with puzzled, worried eyes," men whose business amounts only to "curious ritualized thievery" and whose lives consist only of "thin, tiresome routines." Such people are naturally looked on

with contempt by Steinbeck's fine proletarian truck drivers and by his roadside waitress Mae, who speaks of them with obscene contempt.

Such writing obviously presents no reasoned anti-middle-class philosophy; it offers no illustrated or imaginatively realized case; it does not grow, even, out of the fine old Bohemian tradition of flaying the bourgeoisie. It suggests, rather, a motivation deeply personal, an emotional drive so powerful as to cause Steinbeck to by-pass his reader's intellect and to trigger quite irrational responses. By wrapping the middle classes in connotations of physical weakness, worry, sexual sterility, bafflement, and fear, Steinbeck would waken toward them feelings of revulsion and hate. And if we turn from *The Grapes of Wrath* to other books of Steinbeck — to *Cannery Row* or *The Wayward Bus* — we turn there only to discover the same obsessive hatred of the same class, the same insidious propagandist method, the same skillful aesthetic demagoguery. For many American readers, this discovery could be disconcerting, since they are themselves so likely to be, consciously or unconsciously, members of the middle class. Now it is not disconcerting to deal with an author's hatred of an idea, a particular person, party, or even one of his own characters. But surely it is disconcerting to find that the author hates you, the reader, with a powerful, compulsive hatred; that the tolerance he speaks of so smoothly is in fact never extended to you; and that just in having been born on the right side of the tracks you have committed the one unpardonable sin.

Even so brief a look into these interior meanings of *The Grapes of Wrath* suggests how incomplete is the customary view of Steinbeck's masterpiece — the view, namely, that the book is a naturalistic novel aimed at the exposure of social injustice. For under cover of a pious social objective a number of other and quite different meanings are slipped past the reader's guard: those of hostility, bitterness, and contempt toward the middle classes, of antagonism toward religion in its organized forms, of the enjoyment of a Tobacco-Road sort of slovenliness, of an easygoing promiscuity and animalism in sex, of Casy's curious Transcendental mysticism, of a tolerance that at first seems all-inclusive but that actually extends only so far as Steinbeck's personal preferences.

Now some of these accessory meanings of *The Grapes of Wrath* have been defined by certain of Steinbeck's critics, especially Blake Nevius and John S. Kennedy. But with Steinbeck, as with Faulkner, there has been on the whole a tremendous divergence between the "matter" of the author and the "matter" of the critical studies about him. Divergence has even passed at times into contradiction. Steinbeck has been taken at times as a social idealist in the traditional, democratic sense; but such idealism consorts ill with his calculated release of hatred toward much of the American public. He has been taken as Christian; but actually he has only hijacked — if I may borrow for a moment his

unscrupulous way with language — he has only hijacked part of the Christian story in order to turn it to the illustration of profoundly non-Christian meanings.

How then has it come about, in an age of criticism such as ours, that an important novelist has been so incompletely perceived? Not, in all likelihood, out of any merely personal limitations on the part of his critics, but rather out of the amorphous state of our general culture. For a half-century and more, that culture has been shaken by certain deep-seated conflicts in ideology — conflicts, that is to say, in systems of value; and these conflicts have been so powerful that they could easily bend out of focus any clear vision of what we and our writers actually are. One such conflict pits an idea of society rooted in our traditional democratic idealism, with its bent toward the reconciliation of class differences, against the hard-boiled Marxian attitude of class struggle, with its corollary of releasing all the hatreds needful for breaking an opposing class. Another conflict, concerned if anything even more deeply with the nature of man, pits the humanism of classical and Christian tradition, with its stress on man as a rational and moral being, against the naturalism of recent times, with its stress on man as a nonrational, instinct-driven cog within a mechanical cosmos.

Now it might be reasonably held that much of the deeper tension of our age comes not just from the Machine or just from the stresses of metropolitan living, but rather from the difficulty of choosing between these dilemmas about the nature of society and the nature of man; or, if not of choosing, at least of finding some tenable median point between the two. The sheer difficulty of these choices has seemed to scant some of our intellectuals of clearly seen and firmly held values, and to leave them with only an uncritical acceptance of the ideas that happen to be in vogue at any given moment. This too-ready acceptance of the current intellectual mode has tended of course to blur critical vision; critical perception has depended on what "truths" were in or out of favor. With Steinbeck, this responsiveness to intellectual fashion has afforded a curious sort of protective coloration. Some of his primary meanings were at first all but invisible, so completely was *The Grapes of Wrath* toned in with the intellectual hues of the latter nineteen-thirties.

For on the eve of World War II it was still intellectually fashionable to advocate Marxism, and to clothe that philosophy with its appropriate garments of propaganda. It was fashionable to display one's freedom from the Victorian proprieties; indeed, to go as far toward one extreme as the Victorians had gone toward another. And it was fashionable also to assume a kind of secular religion and ethic, not fully defined even yet, but certainly committed to some such formula as "Sex made easy." Since Steinbeck's earlier critics took these attitudes so much for granted, they naturally turned the discussion of *The Grapes of Wrath* in other directions, upon other issues. Yet these attitudes, these "values,"

were not such as might endure forever, knowing no change of hue or form under the eye of eternity. Already they have been undermined by the cataclysm of World War II, the rise of neo-orthodoxy, and the rediscovery of the need for self-discipline. In this new climate of opinion a reader may be, and quite certainly *should* be, confused or even confounded by the difference between what the critics say is in *The Grapes of Wrath*, and what he himself intuitively feels to be there.

The experience conveyed by such fiction is one thing, the critical treatment of that same fiction quite another; and the discrepancy between the two suggests a possible function of criticism at the present time—a function not too different from that suggested a century ago by Matthew Arnold. That is the function of defining precisely the great idea-patterns that have furnished the dynamics of so much of our recent literature; of defining them, and then of interpreting that literature in the light of its relation to these currents of thought. With regard to Steinbeck, such a body of criticism would discourage obscurantist talk about his “Christian symbolism” and his unifying of “three great skeins” of traditional American thought, and would lend aid and comfort to the critical minority who have steadily told the truth about his nonteleological naturalism and his contribution to interclass hatreds.

In essaying this difficult reappraisal of recent literature in the light of its dynamic idea-patterns, perhaps we might hope for some outcome beyond the immediate one of the elucidation of works of art. For does not part of the fascination of criticism, as of creation, lie in just this — that the immediate outcome is never the total one? The task is never finished, and therefore keeps perpetually the excitement of pioneering. In perception, as in exploration, the horizon continually changes; always, in the distance, loom other ranges of blue mountains, remote and unexplored. We shall never wholly chart them, but in our partial efforts we may make some ascent from confusion toward clarity, and gain the release from tension that comes of fuller understanding. For in genuinely knowing our recent authors, and the major ideas that have moved them, we may reasonably hope to grow into a more nearly adequate knowledge of what we as human beings are, and of what is, *now, for us*, the human condition.

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Jose Joaquin Vallejo, 1811-1858, The Chilean "Figaro"

Jose Joaquin Vallejo, the true founder of genuinely national literature in Chile, was born in Copiapo, August 17, 1811. His family was poor, and it was only through his native ability that he acquired the education that he did. After the earthquake that ruined Copiapo in 1819, Vallejo went to live with an uncle, Juan Jose Espejo, in Serena. There he attended the *liceo* for about five or six years. Because of his remarkable record, he was awarded one of the forty-two scholarships that had been established at the Liceo de Chile, the school directed by Mora, a liberal. After this school closed, Vallejo attended the Instituto Nacional for a while. He was too poor to continue and began to work as a clerk in a store. He never obtained the much desired title in law.

In 1835 he received a political appointment from the government (conservative) — secretary to the district of Maule. Although educated under the protection of a *pipiolo*¹ government (his scholarship), he felt no inclination to be one of that party. When the appointment to Maule came to Vallejo, he declared openly that he was not especially a partisan of the conservative government. General Prieto apparently was not disconcerted by the statement and appointed Vallejo in spite of his declaration. Vallejo was completely independent of either party.

¹The nickname *pipiolo* originated among men of some importance who frequented a cafe on the Calle Ahumada. There they played *malilla*. These men used to call the bystanders who asked for money from the winning gamblers *pipiolo*s because of the cry chickens make (*pio-pio*) when seeking grain. The dictionary gives the term as "novice" or "beginner." Perhaps the public had this in mind when they called the founders of the new party *pipiolo*s. See Roman, *Diccionario de chilenismos*.

He was separated from the *pelucones*² by birth, and *pipiolo*s by personal opinion. Alberto Edwards says of him: "He chose for himself the most comfortable place, and from there mocked the ideals of political passions."³

At the time of his appointment the district of Maule was under the supervision of Colonel Domingo Urrutia. Urrutia and Vallejo became fast friends. After eight months, Vallejo resigned and the two men became partners in business. Shortly afterwards, due to politics, business, or both, they became enemies. It is most likely that the quarrel was political. The administrative and political system of the provinces at that time was not in accord with the liberal minded secretary who was ever jealous of the treatment of the provinces. Vallejo was put in jail, escaped and later, when brought to trial, was absolved of all charges.

Poor, unknown, struggling to earn a living, there was nothing up to this point in the life of Vallejo that revealed the future writer and politician. After his court martial (although absolved) his rancor against the administration of the subtreasurer of the government of Maule now became a political issue. Not only in this incident but in others, the contentions that Vallejo had with other people was a reflection of the struggle within himself: Vallejo, the liberal in ideas, against Vallejo, a decided partisan of a strong government. The enthusiasm for the latter gave way for the love that he had for his patria chica (local province)—his Copiapo. This devotion was so strong that Vallejo tended toward liberalism whenever the central government threatened to curb the liberties of a province. Thus his pen became a dagger, as Miguel Luis Amunátegui so characterized it,⁴ for those who had his ill will, and at the same time, a brush to paint Chile and its people in his immortal articles of customs.

Since there was no press in the remote village of Cauquenes (Maule), Vallejo expressed his wrath in articles that circulated in manuscript form. In one of these,⁵ *Una prensa!* (*A Newspaper!*), he satirized the character of those in power in the provinces. One can see in the

²The *pelucones* derived their name from the powdered wigs that the aristocrats wore on solemn occasions during the colonial period. The party consisted of the clergy, the rich and the aristocrats. See Roman, *Diccionario de chilenismos*.

³Alberto Edwards. *Obras de don Jose Joaquin Vallejo-Jotabeche*. Biblioteca de Escritores de Chile; Santiago de Chile: Imprenta Barcelona, 1911. p. xvii.

⁴Miguel Luis Amunátegui. *Ensayos biograficos*. Santiago de Chile: Imprenta Nacional, 1894. III, 333.

⁵Only three survive: *!Una prensa!*, *Mi talisman*, and *La politica*. Vallejo left a great number of manuscripts unedited since he was a very severe judge of his own writing. Unfortunately, his family, fearful of contagion of tuberculosis, after his death burned most of his manuscripts.

writing all the embryonic characteristics of the future writer, especially a keen observation of the ridiculous side of men and things, and a fluid and correct language.⁶

The fact that Vallejo was so very decided and positive was a disadvantage to him politically, but an advantage in his writing: "The spirit of Vallejo, extremely positive, impeded him from seeing beyond men and facts. The same qualities of a keen observer that lifted him so high in the painting of landscapes and characters, incapacitated him in the conception of abstract doctrines."⁷ In 1840 Vallejo collaborated on the political newspaper, the *Guerra a la Tirania* (*War on Tyranny*), one of the worst papers ever published in Chile because of the asperity and acrimony of the attacks against the government. Those political attacks, even when sprinkled with the wit of Vallejo's genius, were repugnant because of the very personal allusions that disfigured the work. Politically Vallejo never seemed foresighted, constant, or logical. Politics brought out the worst in him. He was a liberal in his ideas but his blind affection for his friends made him intolerant.

When Vallejo returned to the province the following year, prosperity was lifting Copiapo out of its prostration. Vallejo became a *tinterillo* (a lawyer who practices without a title), wrote and took an interest in mining. The work as a *tinterillo* furnished him with a living; the writing brought him fame; and the mines made him rich.

His fame rests on three hundred pages of articles of customs. Vallejo loved Copiapo and the Chanarcillo mines. He lived the mining life and suffered all its disappointments and joys. He loved and wrote of the obscure city, from the stones and hods of the *cangalleros* (miners who steal ore, gold in particular) and *apires* (miners).⁸ There were other pictures that he presented also: those of history, mythology, political abuses, ridiculous social evils, and episodes of the period of independence—all written with picturesque vividness.

In 1841 Mariano Jose de Larra became popular in Chile. Vallejo was enthusiastic about "Figaro" and took him as a model. Although Larra's articles were not published in Chile until 1842, he was so well known in 1841 that he was imitated in articles of customs, politics, and the theatre. The *Mercurio* was flooded with articles in the "Figaro" style. This kind of writing was so well received that everyone tried it.

⁶One must bear in mind that when Vallejo was producing these first literary attempts, Larra was not yet known in Chile. The first collection of Larra's works did not reach Chile until 1841.

⁷Alberto Edwards. *Obras de don Jose Joaquin Vallejo-Jotabeche*, p. xvi.

⁸Domingo Amunategui Solar. *Las letras chilenas*. 2nd ed.; Santiago, Chile: Editorial Nascimento, 1934. p. 67.

At one time the *Mercurio de Valparaiso* received so many of these, especially about the theatre,⁹ that the editors declared (November 7, 1841) that for one week, they would like to throw all such communications into the yard, as the housekeeper and niece of Don Quixote did with the books of the famous Knight-errant.

Vallejo's first piece of work after he had read Larra's articles, was simply entitled *Carta* (*Letter*) (written April 23, 1841). It was a description, in the form of a letter to a friend, of Maipo and the cordillera. This article revealed all the qualities that became intensified later: purity of language, clarity, conciseness, good taste, and a personal and direct observation of the things of which he wrote. The *Carta* (*Letter*) was published May 16, 1841, in the *Mercurio*. It was signed *Tuyo* (*Yours*). After the *Carta* (*Letter*), Vallejo signed the first series consisting of twelve articles with the initials J. B. M.; the second series, with the initials J. B. C.; then a few articles were signed J. B. Ch.; and finally, the last articles all had the signature: "Jotabeche."¹⁰

Vallejo's articles will live because they are thoroughly imbued with originality. Alberto Edwards finds that the one thing that distinguishes Vallejo is the type of irony that he used: "This distinguishes him advantageously from almost all the writers of his kind, who when scrutinized close, present us usually the sad spectacle of disillusioned and gloomy spirits, victims of cruel inner struggles; and who when they

⁹The play that was discussed so much was *El pilluelo de Paris* (*The Little Rogue of Paris*) in which Toribia Miranda played the part of the *pilluelo*.

¹⁰Later, Sarmiento (*Progreso*, January 4, 1843) under the name of Zamora de Adalid claimed that it was such a pity that Vallejo had taken his pen name from an Argentine, Juan Bautista Chenau, when he (Vallejo) was attacking the Argentines so bitterly. There was in Copiapo an Argentine by that name known for his witty sayings and sprightliness. According to Miguel Luis Amunategui there was not the slightest relation between Chenau and the pseudonym of Vallejo; yet Amunategui offered no proof of this. (See Miguel Luis Amunategui, *Ensayos biograficos*, III, 217.)

Vicuna Mackenna gives a completely different version of how Vallejo selected his pen name: During a naval skirmish between the French and English off the coast of Malta on March 20, 1800, there was born aboard ship the Frenchman Jean Baptiste Chaigneau. In 1835, this M. Chaigneau arrived in Chile, having already made a respectable fortune. He became the founder of the House of Bordes. (He died in Potosi in 1867). Quite often M. Chaigneau visited the printing establishment of the *Mercurio de Valparaiso* where the writers gathered.

One day Vallejo told Chaigneau that he (Vallejo) was going to immortalize the Frenchman's name. Chaigneau laughingly inquired how that could be done. Vallejo answered that he was going to make the name his own, by using just the initials. Vallejo then wrote on a scrap of paper, using the three initials, pronouncing each as he did so — J (*jota*), B (*be*), Ch (*che*), Jotabeche. See Benjamin Vicuna Mackenna, *Paginas olvidadas* (Santiago, Editorial Nascimento, 1931), p. 191.

laugh, let one divine, back of their laughter, the hatred and scorn that humanity inspires in them. The irony of Vallejo is of a very different nature; it is the innocent and jovial irony of a good soul, at peace with the world and his own conscience, and free from dangerous passions and mortifying doubts."¹¹

Alberto Edwards further points out that Vallejo's principal defect was due to his disposition and to the times in which he wrote: "His sin was rather the offspring of the customs of his time and the vivacity of his temperament, than of his purpose and will, and if we may compare his most biting works to those of his contemporaries, we cannot reproach Jotabeche for anything that was not the common fault of them all."¹²

As to his style, words flowed from his facile pen with great spontaneity. Yet, those who knew him well said that it was the product of long hours of careful work—*la difícil facilidad de Horacio* (the difficult facility of Horace).¹³

Vallejo's career in the field of letters was brief and his enduring productions scarce. (His journalistic work was longer and not as lasting.) He did not begin to write until after he was thirty years old, and he wrote only ten years. Since he was mature, there were qualities that he might not have possessed had he begun his literary work earlier. His outstanding qualities are penetrating and exact observation, originality, good taste, and intellectual independence. Arteaga Alemparte says of him: "His rare talent of observation, schooled in the treatment and the knowledge of men, in the experience of life, in the disappointments of fortune could be exercised surely and fully, to pursue in the most hidden asylums, the weaknesses and social absurdities, to rise above the influence of preoccupations for prevailing ideas, of traditions of the home and school."¹⁴

Although Jotabeche admired and read Larra, his own articles are individual and thoroughly Chilean. Not even the constant reading of Larra could dim his personality. Jotabeche's masterly portraits of a provincial, a liberal, social gatherings, etc. could not be copied from "Figaro":

To paint them (the portraits), he sought colors in the discerning and patient observation of Chilean society, then he

¹¹Alberto Edwards. *Obras de don Jose Joaquin Vallejo-Jotabeche*, p. xliii.

¹²*Ibid.*

¹³*Ibid.*, p. xxxii.

¹⁴Domingo Arteaga Alemparte. *Vida i escritos de don Jose Joaquin Vallejo*. Anales de la Universidad de Chile; Santiago de Chile: Imprenta Nacional, 1866. XXVIII, p. 462.

spread and mixed them skillfully on the palette of his ideal, and with his master brush gave life to those canvases that are called 'the articles of Jotabeche.' Beautiful canvases, where the charm of genius, festive and picaresque humor, scant, and pleasing melancholy, discreet irony, diamond-pointed satire, have happily distributed lights and shadows, and have realized with the beauty of the coloring, the purity and correctness of the drawing. Beautiful articles that will always be a charm for those who know how to enjoy literary products, and that later will be of great aid to the historian in the study of the changes and transformations of our society, our habits and our customs.¹⁵

Vallejo in his articles of customs caught the spirit of what was typically Chilean at heart. The mold that he used was not new but the metal poured into it was taken from and smelted in Chile.¹⁶ Jotabeche's devotion to his local province broadened into the interpretation of a nation. Probably the greatest influence in the literary life of Vallejo came directly from Spain. First there was his early training under Mora and later, the influence, or rather the inspiration, coming from Larra.

Alberto Edwards however does not find that "Jotabeche" and "Figaro" have many points in common: "Larra was above all a literary critic and a political polemic; even his articles of customs present a different cut from those of Jotabeche. He studies and satirizes social vices and characters singly, and, although a fine annalist, he did not reach the great artistic quality of Vallejo, that broad and instinctive comprehension of atmosphere and landscape, that brings together in one living and harmonious picture, nature and man. What in one was far-reaching, deep, laborious, in the other was rapid and synthetic observation."¹⁷

What Alberto Edwards failed to see was that Vallejo had selected from the reading of Larra one particular phase—correct language. Some might wish to stress the romanticism in Larra. Larra was romantic, it is true, but in the sense that Spaniards have always been romantic—a mixture of joy and sorrow, disregard for the unities, etc. But all of this was without detriment to the language, and never indulging in such fantastic creations as were to sweep through France to Buenos Aires and then across the Andes. Hence in the literary polemics of 1842¹⁸ at the

¹⁵*Ibid.*, p. 463.

¹⁶M. L. Amunategui. *Ensayos biograficos*. III, 282.

¹⁷Alberto Edwards. *Obras de don Jose Joaquín Vallejo- Jotabeche*, p. xxiv.

¹⁸Beyond the scope of this article are the literary controversies that arose in 1842. The clash of opinions and nationalities can be traced through the various reviews and newspapers. The controversy is usually divided into the polemic of purism, and that of romanticism. In reality it is but one polemic with three phases: purism, romanticism, and a wrangle that degenerated into a personal squabble.

height of his career—in full maturity—Vallejo dipped his pen in vitriolic ink to defend against Argentines or Chileans the two qualities upon which his fame rests—namely, form and reality.

One of the outstanding events in Vallejo's career after 1842 was his election to the faculty of the University of Chile in 1843. This was an official confirmation of his literary reputation. This election served to soften Vallejo's attitude toward Andres Bello concerning the reformed spelling that the latter proposed.¹⁹ Vallejo esteemed form so highly that he could not comprehend how Bello, a conservative and a research scholar, could sanction reformed spelling. Jotabeche feared that mere publication would bring the ridicule of other nations upon Chile. The distinction of being elected to membership in the newly founded university so pleased Vallejo that, according to Miguel Luis Amunátegui, he was almost ready to accept the reformed spelling.²⁰

Apparently Vallejo was not actively connected with the University of Chile after 1845 since his activities centered around mining and journalism in Copiapo, or politics both local and national.

In 1845 Vallejo founded the newspaper the *Copiapino* to have a means whereby he could advocate the cause of the province against a strong central government. The following year Vallejo sold the paper to his opponents. He remained in Copiapo, busied himself with mining but ceased writing.

In 1849 Vallejo was elected to congress as representative from Vallenar and Freirina. Jotabeche however was a writer, not an orator. His ability was in his pen, not in his tongue. Hence he played only a secondary role in congress. He was elected again in 1852, this time as a representative of Cauquenes and Constitution. He never took his seat because he was sent to La Paz as charge d'affaires. Diplomatic relations with Bolivia were not on too firm a footing and were about to be broken. Vallejo was benevolent to the point of unjustifiable weakness, and so he was recalled. This commission ended his public career. He returned to Copiapo and became a member of the company that was building a railroad to Caldera. He was active in this work until consumption undermined his health, and he died in 1858.

¹⁹The reformed spelling maintained the vowels: *a, e, i, o, u*, and the consonants: *m, r, s, t, d, l, ch, b, p, n, c, ll, rr, ñ, j*, and *f*. The consonants *k, z, v, x, h, qu, ph*, and *w* were considered as foreign and were to be used in foreign words only. The letter *c* before *e* and *i* was to be written *s* (*hacia* became *asia*; *centavo* became *sentabo*, etc.). The letter *u* was dropped from *gue* and *gui*, and *que* and *qui* (*guerra* became *gera*, *que* became *ge*, etc.). The letter *r* used initially was to be doubled (*ramo* became *rramo*, etc.). The letter *h* was suppressed, appearing only in foreign words (*habeas corpus*). Since the letter *y* was a consonant only, the letter *i* replaced it in diphongs (*hoy* became *oi*, *rey* became *rei*, *y* became *i*, etc.).

²⁰M. L. Amunátegui. *Ensayos biograficos*. Santiago de Chile: Imprenta Nacional, 1894. III, 231-232.

Book Reviews

Out of Our Past: The Forces That Shaped Modern America, by Carl N. Degler. \$4.50. New York: Harper and Brothers. 1959.

Seldom has an American historian attempted to write a history of the nation from the point of view which Professor Degler has chosen. He presents only those events and movements which he believes have had a decisive significance in the formation of the modern United States. The average American historian is a timid man who pursues a safe and colorless course in the interpretation of history. Not so is Professor Degler, who expresses bold opinions and unconventional judgments as if he had recently read Emerson's advice to the American scholar, given in the famous Phi Beta Kappa address, to be self-reliant and follow intuition. Notwithstanding, his conclusions are based on wide and intelligent reading, as demonstrated by his excellent critical bibliography. His sympathies are unequivocally aligned with the liberal interpretation of American history. His discussion of race problems, the role of women, the social gospel, and the struggles of the workingman in our history indicate very clearly that he is a modern liberal.

One of his bold departures is an emphasis on the role of ideas in our history. "Noble ideals," he writes in the preface, "like equality, opportunity, and democratic government are as American as big, flashy automobiles or indoor plumbing." These ideas he defines as, not the productions of great thinkers, but the beliefs, values, and faiths of the people. In fresh, clear, and sparkling prose he shows how some of these ideas, public education and Christian justice, for examples, affected the development of American history. His volume, I think, is one of the most stimulating and provocative studies of the social and intellectual history of the United States since the publication of Arthur M. Schlesinger's *New Viewpoints in American History*.

Yet, it displays a weakness characteristic of the whole school of American social history—the neglect of the personal factor in history. To me history is made up of *people*, leaders as well as followers. It is not wholly the product of vague impersonal forces. It is fascinating, indeed, to follow the working out of great ideas in our history such as Professor Degler presents, but then the question occurs, how did these ideas arise? Did they mysteriously come from the minds of thousands of common men as they struggled to adapt themselves to the American environment? Did not, on the other hand, our leaders and great thinkers,

such as Jefferson or William James—or even foreign innovators, such as Sigmund Freud—modify the course of American history in a larger way than in details? I receive the impression that in this respect the author subscribes to the interpretation of Professor Schlesinger.

Out of Our Past discounts, rightly I think, the overemphasis on economic factors in historical interpretation, which was so popular in the era of Charles A. Beard. The author, with an admirable sense of realism, portrays the economic aspect of historical events in its proper place. Very often in American history there has been a close interrelation between economics and idealism, which Professor Degler's study illustrates by a discussion of the Puritan gospel of work. Furthermore, the author concludes, the primary reason for the occurrence of the American Revolution was not economic grievances, but political and social differences between the Americans and the British government. Again, in searching for the causes of the enduring race discrimination against the Negro in this country, so different from the experience of Brazil, he believes that such discrimination was not owing to economic considerations or even to the stigma of slavery, but to the "folk bias" of the English people in the seventeenth century.

Professor Degler's point of view in presenting the role of popular ideas in American history is carried out consistently throughout the volume. It is this plan that perhaps explains why he did not give more attention to the role of literature and art in shaping American society. His liberal interpretation of American history is displayed in his whole-hearted—too whole-hearted—acceptance of the revisionist point of view in respect to Reconstruction. In discussing the rise of modern industrialism he takes issue with Beard's analysis of the captains of industry. The chapter entitled "The Third American Revolution" is one of the most striking in the book, for it brilliantly portrays the big change produced by "the Depression" and the "New Deal," not only in political and economic fields, but in the intimate psychology of the American people. *Out of the Past* is such an able and delightful interpretation of American history that it will certainly be a strong candidate for a Pulitzer Prize.

Clement Eaton
University of Kentucky

The Angry Scar: The Story of Reconstruction, by Hodding Carter. 414 pp. \$5.95. Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc. 1959.

In the *Angry Scar* a nationally famous Southern moderate has undertaken the formidable task of explaining the South to the rest of

the nation, and incidentally to the Southerners themselves. Believing that those things which set present day Southerners apart from the general run of Americans are rooted in the past, Hodding Carter, winner of a Pulitzer Prize and editor of the Greenville *Democrat-Times*, sought and found important causes for them in the history of the South since the Civil War.

Admitting frankly that his research is based entirely upon secondary sources, the author states that his work is intended to be "an interpretative synthesis of a considerable body of writing on the Reconstruction Period," a statement which invites comparison with W. J. Cash's *Mind of the South* (New York, 1941). If the reader is thus led to expect a new evaluation of Southern history and culture such as that presented by Mr. Cash, who was also a distinguished journalist, he will be disappointed. Mr. Carter advances no fresh interpretations of his own, but relies, instead, upon the ideas of Professor C. Vann Woodward and Francis Butler Simkins to bring Claude Bowers' *The Tragic Era* (1929) up to date.

Although the professional historian will find little assistance in *The Angry Scar*, it does not follow that the book is without merit. The general reader who has neither the time nor the desire to wade through the standard texts will find them summarized in a delightful literary style by a skillful journalist trained to tell an interesting story. He will also find that Mr. Carter is at his best when he gives character sketches of prominent personalities of the Reconstruction era. Moreover, a history by so well-known an author as Mr. Carter will undoubtedly attract more attention than one written by a professional historian. Indeed, if the author succeeds in better informing even a small segment of the American reading public about the South and the origin of its race problem, he will have performed a valuable service for his region and the nation as well.

John Hebron Moore
University of Mississippi

Religion and American Democracy, by Roy F. Nichols. 108 pp. \$2.50.
Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press. 1959.

Professor Roy F. Nichols, distinguished American historian at the University of Pennsylvania, recently gave the Rockwell Lectures at The Rice Institute. They have been made into an attractive little book entitled *Religion and American Democracy* by the Louisiana State University Press. It is a welcome volume.

In the first section, the author relates clearly and informatively the story of the early settlements, with emphasis upon the religious

motivation in each case. It is refreshing to find a professional historian of good standing giving a religious slant to a subject which has been treated for so long very largely from the economic standpoint.

The religious influence of the settlements, the author thinks, was democratic, "perhaps in spite of itself." The Protestant splintering, that is to say, was a blessing in disguise. There's safety in numbers, as an old adage puts it. If the situation had been ecumenical, what dictatorial power might not the "One Church" have arrogated to itself!

In the second section, Professor Nichols deals with the moral dynamic which sprang from Christian evangelism in America. This he identifies—too closely perhaps—with the "Arminian Revolution." I say perhaps too closely, because sects other than the Methodists were active revivalists: the Baptists and the Campbellites, for example, who were certainly more Calvinistic than Arminian. Besides, the leader of the first Great Awakening was the great Calvinist, Jonathan Edwards himself.

But be this as it may, it is interesting to see the 19th Century reform movements attributed to Christian influence. The author sees this influence in "the anti-bank, anti-liquor, and anti-slavery crusades." He implies a continuation of the influence in Bryan's Free Silver, Theodore Roosevelt's Trust-Busting, Wilson's New Freedom, and Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal. The argument is a persuasive one.

One wonders how much of the old-time dynamic may be left today. The concluding paragraph is worth quoting:

In the beginning of this consideration American democracy was presented as being constructed at a time when man as an individual was emerging from the mass of mankind and finding himself as a person. This experience was closely connected with religion. Now when there are so many influences at work to drive man back into the mass, shorn of his individuality, this belief in democracy, if maintained with religious fervor, may be the saving agent which will keep him still an individual, strong in his faith, in his dignity, and in his power derived from religious insight. Man's belief in his capacity for self-government under divine guidance may well be the salvation of the American Way.

This is well said. The question now would seem to be, whether we are willing to seek "divine guidance" honestly, contritely; whether the "religious fervor" can be rekindled; whether we are any longer capable of "religious insight."

Randall Stewart
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